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From the collection of Richard Henry Best.
Given by his Executors, May 1934



#7

MISCELLANEOUS

POEMS.

BY

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

LONDON.

WILLIAM BENBOW, 252. HIGH-HOLBORN.

1826.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
A Bridal Song	67
A Dirge	25
A Fragment	66
A Lament	45
A Lament	98
An Allegory	7
Arethusa	42
Autumn	51
A Vision of the Sea	122
Charles the First	109
Death	8
Death. They die the dead return not—Misery.	13
Dirge for the Year	26
Evening	41
Epitaph	121
From the Arabic	9
Ginevra	28
Good Night	73
Hymn of Apollo	52
Hymn to Pan	54
Hymn to Intellectual Beauty	23
Liberty	17
Lines—Far, far away, O ye	25
Lines—That time is dead forever child	27
Lines—When the lamp is shattered	4
Lines—The cold earth sleep below	12
Lines to a critic	71
Lines to an Indian Air	43
Lines on the death of Napoleon	80
Love's Philosophy	2
Mazenghi	73
Mont Blanc	90
Music	11
Mutability	8
Ode to Naples	82
On the Medusa on Leonardo Da Vinci	96
Passage of the Apennines	16
Prince Athanase	133
Prince Athanase Part Second	133
Sonnet I.	20
Do II.	21
Do III.	22
Do IV.	23
Song a widow Bird	24
Song. On the Faded violet	70
Song Rarely, Rarely, comest thou	87

CONTENTS.

IV

	PAGE.
Song for Tasso	76
Song on a faded violet	70
Song of a Spirit	19
Stanzas Written in Dejection, near Naples	49
The Boat	56
The Fugitives	104
The Isle	20
The Past	5
The Pine Forest	69
The Question	46
The Sunset	68
The Two Spirits	64
The World's Wanderer's	1
The Zucca*	60
The Waning Moon	121
The wood man and Nightingale	77
Time	16
To the Moon	131
To William Shelley	6
To Constantia	107
To E . . . V . . .	24
To Morrow	36
To a Skylark	123
To Night	39
To—I fear thy kisses, gentle maiden	36
To—One one word is too often profaned	10
To—Mine eyes were dim with tears unsbed	18
To—When Passion's trance is overpast	14
To—Music, when soft voices die	27
To Mary	15

MISCELLANEOUS

POEMS.

- THE WORLD'S WANDERERS.

TELL me, thou star, whose wings of light
Speed thee in thy fiery flight,
In what cavern of the night
Will thy pinions close now ?

Tell me, moon, thou pale and grey
Pilgrim of heaven's homeless way,
In what depth of night or day
Seekest thou repose now ?

Weary wind, who wanderest
Like the world's rejected guest,
Hast thou still some secret nest
On the tree or billow ?

LOVE'S PHILOSOPHY.

AN IMITATION FROM THE FRENCH.

THE fountains mingle with the river,
And the rivers with the ocean,
The winds of heaven mix for ever
With a sweet emotion;
Nothing in the world is single;
All things by a law divine
In one another's being mingle—
Why not I with thine ?

See the mountains kiss high heaven,
And the waves clasp one another ;
No sister flower would be forgiven
If it disdained its brother :
And the sunlight clasps the earth,
And the moonbeams kiss the sea,
What are all these kissings worth,
If thou kiss not me ?

January, 1820.

DEATH.

DEATH is here and death is there,
Death is busy every where,
All around, within, beneath,
Above is death—and we are death.

Death has set his mark and seal
On all we are and all we feel,
On all we know and all we fear,

* * * *

First our pleasures die—and then
Our hopes, and then our fears—and when
These are dead, the debt is due,
Dust claims dust—and we die too.

All things that we love and cherish,
Like ourselves must fade and perish,
Such is our rude mortal lot,
Love itself would, did they not.

LINES.

WHEN the lamp is shattered
The light in the dust lies dead—
When the cloud is scattered
The rainbow's glory is shed.
When the lute is broken,
Sweet tones are remembered not ;
When the lips have spoken,
Loved accents are soon forgot.

As music and splendour
Survive not the lamp and the lute,
The heart's echoes render
No song when the spirit is mute ;
No song but sad dirges,
Like the wind through a ruined cell,
Or the mournful surges
That ring the dead seaman's knell.

When hearts have once mingled
Love firstleaves the well-built nest,
The weak one is singled
To endure what it once possest.
O, Love ! who bewailest
The frailty of all things here,
Why choose you the frailest
For your cradle, your home and your bier ?

Its passions will rock thee
As the storms rock the ravens on high :
Bright reason will mock thee,
Like the sun from a wintry sky.
From thy nest every rafter
Will rot, and thine eagle home
Leave the naked to laughter,
When leaves fall and cold winds come.

THE PAST.

WILT thou forget the happy hours
Which we buried in Love's sweet bowers,
Heaping over their corpses cold
Blossoms and leaves, instead of mould ?
Blossoms which were the joys that felt,
And leaves, the hopes that yet remain.

Forget the dead, the past ? O yet
There are ghosts that may take revenge for it,
Memories that make the heart a tomb,
Regrets which glide through the spirit's gloom,
And with ghastly whispers tell
That joy, once lost, is pain.

TO WILLIAM SHELLEY.

(With what truth I may say—
 Roma! Roma! Roma!
 Non è più come era prima!)

My lost William, thou in whom
 Some bright spirit lived, and did
 That decaying robe consume
 Which its lustre faintly hid,
 Here its ashes find a tomb,
 But beneath this pyramid
 Thou art not—if a thing divine
 Like thee can die, thy funeral shrine
 Is thy mother's grief and mine.

Where art thou, my gentle child?
 Let me think thy spirit feeds,
 Within its life intense and mild,
 The love of living leaves and weeds,
 Among these tangles and ruins wild;—
 Let me think that through low seeds
 Of the sweet flowers and sunny grass,
 Into their hues and scents may pass
 A portion ———

June, 1819.

AN ALLEGORY.

A PORTAL as of shadowy adamant
Stands yawning on the highway of the life
Which we all tread, a cavern huge and gaunt ;
Around it rages an unceasing strife
Of shadows, like the restless clouds that haunt
The gap of some cleft mountain, lifted high
Into the whirlwinds of the uppersky.

And many passed it by with careless tread,
Not knowing that a shadowy []
Tracks every traveller even to where the dead
Wait peacefully for their companion new ;
But others, by more curious humour led,
Pause to examine,—these are very few,
And they learn little there, except to know
That shadows follow them where'er they go.

MUTABILITY.

THE flower that smiles to-day
To-morrow dies ;
All that we wish to stay,
Tempts and then flies ;
What is this world's delight ?
Lightning that mocks the night,
Brief even as bright.

Virtue, how frail it is !
Friendship too rare !
Love, how it sells poor bliss
For proud despair !
But we, though soon they fall,
Survive their joy and all
Which ours we call.

Whilst skies are blue and bright,
Whilst flowers are gay,
Whilst eyes that change ere night
Make glad the day ;
Whilst yet the calm hours creep,
Dream thou—and from thy sleep
Then wake to weep.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

9

FROM THE ARABIC.

AN IMITATION.

My faint spirit was sitting in the light
Of thy looks, my love ;
It panted for thee like the hind at noon
For the brooks, my love.
Thy barb whose hoofs outspeed the tempest's flight
Bore thee far from me ;
My heart, for my weak feet were weary soon,
Did companion thee.

Ah ! fleeter far than fleetest storm or steed,
Or the death they bear,
The heart which tender thought clothes like a dove
With the wings of care ;
In the battle, in the darkness, in the need,
Shall mine cling to thee,
Nor claim one smile for all the comfort, love,
It may bring to thee.

TO——

ONE word is too often profaned
For me to profane it,
One feeling too falsely disdained
For thee to disdain it,
One hope is too like despair
For prudence to smother,
And Pity from thee more dear,
Than that from another.

I can give not what men call love,
But wilt thou accept not
The worship the heart lifts above
And the Heavens reject not,
The desire of the moth for the star,
Of the night for the morrow,
The devotion to something afar
From the sphere of our sorrow ?

MUSIC.

I PANT for the music which is divine,
 My heart in its thirst is a dying flower ;
 Pour forth the sound like enchanted wine,
 Loosen the notes in a silver shower ;
 Like a herbless plain, for the gentle rain,
 I gasp, I faint, till they wake again.

Let me drink of the spirit of that sweet sound,
 More, O more,—I am thirsting yet,
 It loosens the serpent which care has bound
 Upon my heart to stifle it ;
 The dissolving strain, through every vein,
 Passes into my heart and brain.

As the scent of a violet withered up,
 Which grew by the brink of a silver lake ;
 When the hot noon has drained its dewy cup,
 And mist there was none its thirst to slake—
 And the violet lay dead while the odour flew
 On the wings of the wind o'er the waters blue—

As one who drinks from a charmed cup
 Of foaming, and sparkling and murmuring wine
 Whom, a mighty Enchantress filling up,
 Invites to love with her kiss divine.

* * * * *
 * * * * *

LINES.

THE cold earth slept below ;
Above the cold sky shone ;
And all around,
With a chilling sound,
From caves of ice and fields of snow,
The breath of night like death did flow
Beneath the sinking moon.

The wintry hedge was black,
The green-grass was not seen,
The birds did rest
On the bare thorn's breast,
Whose roots, beside the pathway track,
Had bound their folds o'er many a crack
Which the frost had made between.

Thine eyes glowed in the glare
Of the moon's dying light ;
As a fen-fire's beam,
On a sluggish stream,
Gleams dimly—so the moon shone there,
And it yellowed the strings of thy tangled hair
That shook in the wind of night.

The moon made thy lips pale, beloved ;
The wind made thy bosom chill ;
The night did shed
On thy dear head

Its frozen dew, and thou didst lie
Where the bitter breath of the naked sky
Might visit thee at will.

November, 1815.

DEATH.

THEY die—the dead return not—Misery
Sits near an open grave and calls them over,
A Youth with hoary hair and haggard eye—
They are the names of kindred, friend, and lover,
Which he so feebly called—they all are gone !
Fond wretch, all dead, those vacant names alone,
This most familiar scene, my pain—
These tombs alone remain.

Misery, my sweetest friend—oh ! weep no more !
Thou wilt not be consoled—I wonder not !
For I have seen thee from thy dwelling's door
Watch the calm sunset with them, and this spot
Was even as bright and calm, but transitory,
And now thy hopes are gone, thy hair is hoary ;
This most familiar scene, my pain—
These tombs alone remain.

TO ———

WHEN passion's trance is overpast,
If tenderness and truth could last
Or live, whilst all wild feelings keep
Some mortal slumber, dark and deep,
I should not weep, I should not weep!

It were enough to feel, to see
Thy soft eyes gazing tenderly,
And dream the rest—and burn and be
The secret food of fires unseen,
Couldst thou but be as thou hast been.

After the slumber of the year
The woodland violets re-appear,
All things revive in field or grove,
And sky and sea, but two, which move,
And for all others, life and love.

TO MARY ———

Oh ! Mary dear, that you were here
 With your brown eyes bright and clear,
 And your sweet voice, like a bird
 Singing love to its lone mate
 In the ivy hower disconsolate ;
 Voice the sweetest ever heard !
 And your brow more * * *
 Than the * * * sky
 Of this azure Italy.
 Mary dear, come to me soon,
 I am not well whilst thou art far ;
 As sunset to the sphered moon,
 As twilight to the western star,
 Thou, beloved, art to me.

Oh ! Mary dear, that you were here ;
 The Castle echo whispers " Here ! "

Kato, September 1818.

PASSAGE OF THE APENNINES.

LISTEN, listen, Mary mine,
To the whisper of the Apennine,
It bursts on the roof like the thunder's roar,
Or like the sea on a northern shore,
Heard in its raging ebb and flow
By the captives pent in the cave below.
The Apennine in the light of day
Is a mighty mountain dim and grey,
Which between the earth and sky doth lay;
But when night comes, a chaos dread
On the dim starlight then is spread,
And the Apennine walks abroad with the storm.

May 4th, 1818.

TIME.

UNFATHOMABLE Sea! whose waves are years,
Ocean of Time, whose waters of deep woe
Are brackish with the salt of human tears!
Thou shoreless flood, which in thy ebb and flow
Claspest the limits of mortality!
And sick of prey, yet howling on for more,
Vomitest thy wrecks on its inhospitable shore,
Treacherous in calm, and terrible in storm,
Who shall put forth on thee,
Unfathomable Sea?

LIBERTY.

THE fiery mountains answer each other ;
Their thunderings are echoed from zone to zone ;
The tempestuous oceans awake one another,
And the ice-rocks are shaken round winter's zone
When the clarion of the Typhoon is blown.

From a single cloud the lightning flashes,
Whilst a thousand Isles are illumined around,
Earthquake is trampling one city to ashes,
An hundred are shuddering and tottering ; the sound
Is bellowing underground.

But keener thy gaze than the lightning's glare,
And swifter thy step than the earthquake's tramp ;
Thou deafenest the rage of the ocean ; thy stare
Makes blind the volcanos : the sun's bright lamp
To thine is a fen-fire damp.

From billow and mountain and exhalation
The sunlight is darted through vapour and blast.
From spirit to spirit, from nation to nation,
From city to hamlet thy dawning is cast,—
And tyrants and slaves are like shadows of night
In the van of the morning light.

TO———

MINE eyes were dim with tears unshed ;
Yes, I was firm—thus did not thou ;
My baffled looks did fear yet dread
To meet thy looks—I could not know
How anxiously they sought to shine
With soothing pity upon mine.

To sit and curb the soul's mute rage
Which preys upon itself alone ;
To curse the life which is the cage
Of fettered grief that dares not groan,
Hiding from many a careless eye
The scorned load of agony.

Whilst thou alone, then not regarded,
The [] thou alone should be,
To spend years thus, and be rewarded,
As thou, sweet love, requited me
When none were near—Oh ! I did wake /
From torture for that moment's sake.

Upon my heart thy accents sweet
Of peace and pity, fell like dew
On flowers half dead ;—thy lips did meet
Mine tremblingly ; thy dark eyes threw
Their soft persuasion on my brain,
Charming away its dream of pain.

We are not happy, sweet; our state
Is strange and full of doubt and fear;
More need of words that ills abate;—
Reserve or censure come not near
Our sacred friendship, lest there be
No solace left for thee and me.

Gentle and good and mild thou art,
Nor I can live if thou appear
Aught but thyself, or turn thine heart
Away from me, or stoop to wear
The mask of scorn, although it be
To hide the love you feel for me.

SONG OF A SPIRIT.

WITHIN the silent centre of the earth
My mansion is; where I have lived insphered
From the beginning, and around my sleep
Have woven all the wondrous imagery
Of this dim spot, which mortals call the world;
Infinite depths of unknown elements
Massed into one impenetrable mask;
Sheets of immeasurable fire, and veins
Of gold and stone, and adamant iron.
And as a veil in which I walk through Heaven
I have wrought mountains, seas, and waves, and clouds,
And lastly light, whose interfusion dawns
In the dark space of interstellar air.

THE ISLE.

THERE was a little lawny islet
By anemone and violet,
Like mosaic, paven :
And its roof was flowers and leaves
Which the summer's breath enweaves,
Where nor sun nor showers nor breeze
Pierce the pines and tallest trees,
Each a gem engraven.
Girt by many an azure wave
With which the clouds and mountains pave
A lake's blue chasm.

SONNET I.

YE hasten to the dead ! What seek ye there,
Ye restless thoughts and busy purposes
Of the idle brain, which the world's livery wear ?
Oh thou quick Heart which pantest to possess
All that anticipation feigneth fair !
Thou vainly curious mind which wouldst guess
Whence thou didst come, and whither thou may'st go,
And that which never yet was known wouldst know
Oh, whither hasten ye that thus ye press
With such swift feet life's green and pleasant path,
Seeking alike from happiness and woe
A refuge in the cavern of grey death ?
Oh heart, and mind, and thoughts ! What thing do you
Hope to inherit in the grave below ?

SONNET II.

POLITICAL GREATNESS.

Nor happiness, nor majesty, nor fame,
Nor peace, nor strength, nor skill in arms or arts,
Shepherd those herds whom tyranny makes tame ;
Verse echoes not one beating of their hearts,
History is but the shadow of their shame,
Art veils her glass, or from the pageant starts
As to oblivion their blind millions fleet,
Staining that Heaven with obscene imagery
Of their own likeness. What are numbers knit
By force or custom ? Man who man would be,
Must rule the empire of himself ; in it
Must be supreme, establishing his throne
On vanquished will, quelling the anarchy
Of hopes and fears, being himself alone.

SONNET III.

ALAS ! good friend, what profit can you see
In hating such an hateless thing as me ?
There is no sport in hate where all the rage
Is on one side. In vain would you assuage
Your frowns upon an unresisting smile,
In which not even contempt lurks, to beguile
Your heart, by some faint sympathy of hate.
O conquer what you cannot satiate !
For to your passion I am far more coy
Than ever yet was coldest maid or boy
In winter noon. Of your antipathy
If I am the Narcissus, you are free
To pine into a sound with hating me.

SONNET IV.

LIFT not the painted veil which those who live
Call Life : though unreal shapes be pictured there,
And it but mimic all we would believe
With colours idly spread :—behind, lurk Fear
And Hope, twin destinies ; who ever weave
The shadows, which the world calls substance, there.

I knew one who had lifted it—he sought,
For his lost heart was tender, things to love
But found them not, alas ! nor was there aught
The world contains, the which he could approve.
Through the unheeding many he did move,
A splendour among shadows, a bright blot.
Upon this gloomy scene, a Spirit that strove
For truth, and like the Preacher found it not.

A SONG.

A wipow bird sate mourning for her love
Upon a wintry bough;
The frozen wind kept on above,
The freezing stream below.

There was no leaf upon the forest bare,
No flower upon the ground,
And little motion in the air
Except the mill-wheel's sound.

TO E*** V***

MADONNA, wherefore hast thou sent to me
Sweet basil and mignonette?
Embleming love and health, which never yet
In the same wreath might be.
Alas, and they are wet!
Is it with thy kisses or thy tears?
For never rain or dew
Such fragrance drew
From plant or flower—the very doubt endears
My sadness ever new,
The sighs I breathe, the tears I shed for thee.
March, 1821.

A DIRGE.

Rough wind, that moanest loud
 Grief too sad for song ;
 Wild wind, when sullen cloud
 Knells all the night long ;
 Sad storm, whose tears are vain,
 Bare woods, whose branches stain,
 Deep caves and dreary main,
 Wail, for the world's wrong !

LINES.

FAR, far away, O ye
 Halcyons of memory,
 Seek some far calmer nest
 Than this abandoned breast ;—
 No news of your false spring
 To my heart's winter bring,
 Once having gone, in vain
 Ye come again.

Vultures, who build your bowers
 High in the Future's towers,
 Withered hopes on hopes are spread,
 Dying joys choked by the dead,
 Will serve your beaks for prey
 Many a day.

DIRGE FOR THE YEAR.

ORPHAN hours, the year is dead,
Come and sigh, come and weep!
Merry hours, smile instead,
For the year is but asleep.
See, it smiles as it is sleeping,
Mocking your untimely weeping.

As an earthquake rocks a corse
In its coffin in the clay,
So White Winter, that rough nurse,
Rocks the death-cold year to-day;
Solemn hours! wail aloud
For your mother in her shroud.

As the wild air stirs and sways
The tree-swung cradle of a child,
So the breath of these rude days
Rocks the year:—be calm and mild,
Trembling hours, she will arise
With new love within her eyes.

January grey is here,
Like a sexton by her grave;
February bears the bier,
March with grief doth howl and rave
And April weeps—but, O, ye hours,
Follow with May's fairest flowers.

January 1st, 1821.

LINES.

THAT time is dead forever, child,
Drowned, frozen, dead forever !

We look on the past
And stare aghast
At the spectres wailing, pale and ghast,
Of hopes which thou and I beguiled
To death on life's dark river.

The stream we gazed on then, rolled by ;
Its waves are unreturning ;

But we yet stand
In a lone land,
Like tombs to mark the memory
Of hopes and fears, which fade and flee
In the light of life's dim morning.

November 5th, 1817.

TO ———

MUSIC, when soft voices die,
Vibrates in the memory—
Odours, when sweet violets sicken,
Live within the sense they quicken.

Rose leaves, when the rose is dead,
Are heaped for the beloved's bed ;
And so thy thoughts, when thou art gone,
Love itself shall slumber on.

GINEVRA.*

A FRAGMENT.

WILD, pale, and wonder-stricken, even as one
Who staggers forth into the air and sun
From the dark chamber of a mortal fever,
Bewildered, and incapable, and ever
Fancying strange comments in her dizzy brain
Of usual shapes, till the familiar train
Of objects and of persons passed like things
Strange as a dreamer's mad imaginings,
Ginevra from the nuptial altar went ;
The vows to which her lips had sworn assent
Rung in her brain still with a jarring din,
Deafening the lost intelligence within.

And so she moved under the bridal veil,
Which made the paleness of her cheek more pale,
And deepened the faint crimson of her mouth,
And darkened her dark locks, as moonlight doth,—
And of the gold and jewels glittering there
She scarce felt conscious,—but the weary glare
Lay like a chaos of unwelcome light, .

* This fragment is part of a poem which Mr. Shelley intended to write, founded on a story to be found in the first volume of a book entitled "L'Osservatore Fiorentino."

Vexing the sense with gorgeous undelight.
A moonbeam in the shadow of a cloud
Was less heavenly fair—her face was bowed,
And as she passed, the diamonds in her hair
Were mirrored in the polished marble stair
Which led from the cathedral to the street :
And ever as she went her light fair feet
Erased these images.

The bride-maidens who round her thronging came,
Some with a sense of self-rebuke and shame,
Envy the unenviable; and others
Making the joy which should have been another's
Their own by gentle sympathy; and some
Sighing to think of an unhappy home :
Some few admiring what can ever lure
Maidens to leave the heaven serene and pure
Of parents' smiles for life's great cheat; a thing
Better to taste sweet in imagining.

But they are all dispersed—and, lo! she stands
Looking in idle grief on her white hands,
Alone within the garden now her own;
And through the sunny air, with jangling tone,
The music of the merry marriage bells,
Killing the azure silence, sinks and swells;—
Absorbed like one within a dream who dreams
That he is dreaming, until slumber seems
A mockery of itself—when suddenly
Antonio stood before her, pale as she.
With agony, with sorrow, and with pride,

He lifted his wan eyes upon the bride,
And said—"Is this thy faith?" and then as one
Whose sleeping face is stricken by the sun
With light like a harsh voice, which bids him rise
And look upon his day of life with eyes
Which weep in vain that they can dream no more,
Ginevra saw her lover, and forbore
To shriek or faint, and checked the stifling blood
Rushing upon her heart, and unsubdued
Said—"Friend, if earthly violence or ill,
Suspicion, doubt, or the tyrannic will
Of parents, chance, or custom, time or change,
Or circumstance, or terror, or revenge,
Or wildered looks, or words, or evil speech,
With all their stings [] can impeach
Our love,—we love not:—if the grave which hides
The victim from the tyrant, and divides
The cheek that whitens from the eyes that dart
Imperious inquisition to the heart
That is another's, could dissever ours,
We love not."—"What do not the silent hours
Beckon thee to Gherardi's bridal bed?
Is not that ring"—a pledge, he would have said,
Of broken vows, but she with patient look
The golden circle from her finger took,
And said—"Accept this token of my faith,
The pledge of vows to be absolved by death;
And I am dead or shall be soon—my knell
Will mix it's music with that merry bell,
Does it not sound as if they sweetly said
'We toll a corpse out of a marriage bed?'

The flowers upon my bridal chamber strewn
Will serve unfaded for my bier—so soon
That even the dying violet will not die
Before Ginevra." The strong fantasy
Had made her accents weaker and more weak,
And quenched the crimson life upon her cheek,
And glazed her eyes, and spread an atmosphere
Round her, which chilled the burning noon with fear,
Making her but an image of the thought,
Which, like a prophet or a shadow, brought
News of the terrors of the coming time.
Like an accuser branded with the crime
He would have cast on a beloved friend,
Whose dying eyes reproach not to the end
The pale betrayer— he then with vain repentance
Would share, he cannot now avert, the sentence—
Antonio stood and would have spoken, when
The compound voice of women and of men
Was heard approaching ; he retired, while she
Was led amid the admiring company
Back to the palace,—and her maidens soon
Changed her attire for the afternoon,
And left her at her own request to keep
An hour of quiet and rest :—like one asleep
With open eyes and folded hands she lay,
Pale in the light of the declining day.

Meanwhile the day sinks fast, the sun is set,
And in the lighted hall the guests are met ;
The beautiful looked lovelier in the light
Of love, and admiration, and delight

Reflected from a thousand hearts and eyes
 Kindling a momentary Paradise.
 This crowd is safer than the silent wood,
 Where love's own doubts disturb the solitude;
 On frozen hearts the fiery rain of wine
 Falls, and the dew of music more divine
 Tempers the deep emotions of the time
 To spirits cradled in a sunny clime:—
 How many meet, who never yet have met,
 To part too soon, but never to forget.
 How many saw the beauty, power and wit
 Of looks and words which ne'er enchanted yet;
 But life's familiar veil was now withdrawn,
 As the world leaps before an earthquake's dawn,
 And unprophetic of the coming hours,
 The matin winds from the expanded flowers,
 Scatter their hoarded incense, and awaken
 The earth, until the dewy sleep is shaken
 From every living heart which it possesses,
 Through seas and winds, cities and wildernesses,
 As if the future and the past were all
 Treasured i' the instant;—so Gherardi's hall
 Laughed in the mirth of its lord's festival,
 Till some one asked—"Where is the Bride?" And then
 A bride's-maid went,—and ere she came again
 A silence fell upon the guests—a pause
 Of expectation, as when beauty awes
 All hearts with its approach, though unbeheld;
 Then wonder, and then fear that wonder quelled;—
 For whispers passed from mouth to ear which drew
 The colour from the hearer's cheeks, and flew

Louder and swifter round the company ;
And then Gherardi entered with an eye
Of ostentatious trouble, and a crowd
Surrounded him, and some were weeping loud.

They found Ginevra dead ; if it be death,
To lie without motion, or pulse, or breath,
With waxen cheeks, and limbs cold, stiff and white,
And open eyes, whose fixed and glassy light
Mocked at the speculation they had owned.
If it be death, when there is felt around
A smell of clay, a pale and icy glare,
And silence, and a sense that lifts the hair
From the scalp to the ankles, as it were
Corruption from the spirit passing forth,
And giving all it shrouded to the earth,
And leaving as swift lightning in its flight
Ashes, and smoke, and darkness : in our night
Of thought we know thus much of death,—no more
Than the unborn dream of our life before
Their barks are wrecked on its inhospitable shore,
The marriage feast and its solemnity
Was turned to funeral pomp—the company
With heavy hearts and looks, broke up ; nor they
Who loved the dead went weeping on their way
Alone, but sorrow mixed with sad surprize
Loosened the springs of pity in all eyes,
On which that form, whose fate they weep in vain,
Will never, thought they, kindle smiles again.
The lamps which half extinguished in their haste
Gleamed few and faint o'er the abandoned feast,

Shewed as it were within the vaulted room
 A cloud of sorrow hanging, as if gloom
 Had passed out of men's minds into the air.
 Some few yet stood around Gherardi there,
 Friends and relations of the dead,—and he,
 A loveless man, accepted torpidly
 The consolation that he wanted not,
 Awe in the place of grief within him wrought.
 Their whispers made the solemn silence seem
 More still—some wept, []
 Some melted into tears without a sob,
 And some with hearts that might be heard to throb
 Leant on the table, and at intervals
 Shuddered to hear through the deserted halls
 And corridors the thrilling shrieks, which came
 Upon the breeze of night, that shook the flame
 Of every torch and taper as it swept
 From out the chamber where the women kept;—
 Their tears fell on the dear companion cold
 Of pleasures now departed; then was knolled
 The bell of death, and soon the priests arrived,
 And finding death their penitent had shrived,
 Returned like ravens from a corpse whereon
 A vulture has just feasted to the bone.
 And then the mourning women came.—

* * * * *

THE DIRGE.

Old winter was gone
In his weakness back to the mountains hoar,
And the spring came down
From the planet that hovers upon the shore
Where the sea of sunlight encroaches
On the limits of wintry night ;—
If the land, and the air, and the sea
Rejoice not when spring approaches,
We did not rejoice in thee,

Ginevra !

She is still, she is cold

On the bridal couch,
One step to the white death bed,
And one to the bier,
And one to the charnel—and one, O where ?
The dark arrow fled
In the noon.

Ere the sun through heaven once more has rolled,
The rats in her heart
Will have made their nest,
And the worms be alive in her golden hair,
While the spirit that guides the sun,
Sits throned in his flaming chair,
She shall sleep.

* * * * *

Pisa, 1821.

TO ———

I FEAR thy kisses, gentle maiden,
Thou needest not fear mine ;
My spirit is too deeply laden
Ever to burthen thine.

I fear thy mien, thy tones, thy motion,
Thou needest not fear mine ;
Innocent is the heart's devotion
With which I worship thine.

TO-MORROW.

WHERE art thou, beloved To-morrow ?
Whom young and old and strong and weak,
Rich and poor, through joy and sorrow,
Thy sweet smiles we ever seek,—
In thy place—ah ! well-a-day !
We find the thing we fled—To-day.

SONG.

RARELY, rarely, comest thou,
 Spirit of delight!
 Wherefore hast thou left me now
 Many a day and night?
 Many a weary night and day
 'Tis since thou art fled away.

How shall ever one like me
 Win thee back again?
 With the joys and the free
 Thou wilt scoff at pain.
 Spirit false! thou hast forgot
 All but those who need thee not.

As a lizard with the shade
 Of a trembling leaf,
 Thou with sorrow art diamayed;
 Even the sighs of grief
 Reproach thee, that thou art not near,
 And reproach thou wilt not hear.

Let me set my mournful ditty
 To a merry measure,
 Thou wilt never come for pity
 Thou wilt come for pleasure,
 Pity then will cut away
 Those cruel wings, and thou wilt stay.

Z

I love all that thou lovest,
Spirit of delight !
The fresh Earth in new leaves drest,
And the starry night ;
Autumn evening, and the morn
When the golden mists are born.

I love snow, and all the forms
Of the radiant frost ;
I love waves, and winds, and storms,
Every thing almost
Which is Nature's, and may be
Untainted by man's misery.

I love tranquil solitude,
And such society
As is quiet, wise and good ;
Between thee and me
What difference ? but thou dost possess
The things I seek, not love them less.

I love Love—though he has wings
And like light can flee,
But above all other things,
Spirit, I love thee—
Thou art love and life ! O Come,
Make once more my heart thy home,

TO NIGHT.

Swiftly walk over the western wave,
 Spirit of Night !
Out of the misty eastern cave,
Where, all the long and lone daylight,
Thou wovest dreams of joy and fear,
Which make thee terrible and dear,—
 Swift be thy flight !

Wrap thy form in a mantle grey,
 Star-inwrought !
Blind with thine hair the eyes of day,
Kiss her until she be wearied out,
Then wander o'er city, and sea, and land,
Touching all with thine opiate wand—
 Come, long sought !

When I arose and saw the dawn,
 I sighed for thee ;
When light rode high, and the dew was gone,
And noon lay heavy on flower and tree,
And the weary Day turned to is rest,
Lingering like an unloved guest,
 I sighed for thee.

Thy brother Death came, and cried,
 Wouldst thou me ?
Thy sweet child Sleep, the filmy-eyed,
 Murmured like a noon-tide bee,
Shall I nestle near thy side ?
Wouldst thou me ?—And I replied,
 No, not thee !

Death will come when thou art dead,
 Soon, too soon—
Sleep will come when thou art fled ;
Of neither would I ask the boon
I ask of thee, beloved Night—
Swift be thine approaching flight,
 Come soon, soon !

PONTE A MARE. PISA.

The chasm in which the sun has sunk is shut
By darkest barriers of enormous cloud,
Like mountain over mountain huddled – but
Growing and moving upwards in a crowd,
And over it a space of watery blue,
Which the keen evening star is shining through.

ARETHUSA.

ARETHUSA arose
 From her couch of snows
 In the Acroceraunian mountains,—
 From cloud and from crag,
 With many a jag,
 Shepherding her bright fountains.
 She leapt down the rocks
 With her rainbow locks
 Streaming among the streams ;—
 Her steps paved with green
 The downward ravine
 Which slopes to the western gleams :
 And gliding and springing,
 She went, ever singing,
 In murmurs as soft as sleep ;
 The Earth seemed to love her,
 And Heaven smiled above her,
 As she lingered towards the deep.

Then Alpheus bold
 On his glacier cold,
 With his trident the mountains strook ;
 And opened a chasm
 In the rocks ;—with the spasm
 All Erymanthus shook.

And the black south wind
 It concealed behind
 The urns of the silent snow,
 And earthquake and thunder
 Did rend in sunder
 The bars of the springs below ;
 The beard and the hair
 Of the river God were
 Seen through the torrent's sweep,
 As he followed the light
 Of the fleet nymph's flight
 To the brink of the Dorian deep.

“ Oh, save me ! Oh, guide me !
 And bid the deep hide me,
 For he grasps me now by the hair ! ”
 The loud Ocean heard,
 To its blue depth stirred,
 And divided at her prayer ;
 And under the water
 The Earth's white daughter
 Fled like a sunny beam,
 Behind her descended,
 Her billows unblended,
 With the brackish Dorian stream :—
 Like a gloomy stain
 On the emerald main
 Alpheus rushed behind,—
 As an eagle pursuing
 A dove to its ruin
 Down the streams of the cloudy wind.

Under the bowers
Where the Ocean Powers
Sit on their pearled thrones,
Through the coral woods
Of the weltering floods,
Over heaps of unvalued stones :
Through the dim beams
Which amid the streams
Weave a net-work of coloured light ;
And under the caves,
Where the shadowy waves
Are as green as the forest's night :—
Outspeeding the shark,
And the sword-fish dark,
Under the ocean foam,
And up through the rifts
Of the mountain cliffs
They passed to their Dorian home.

And now from their fountains
In Enna's mountains,
Down one vale where the morning basks,
Like friends once parted
Grown single-hearted,
They ply their watery tasks.
At sun-rise they leap
From their cradles steep
In the cave of the shelving hill ;
At noon-tide they flow
Through the woods below
And the meadows of Asphodel ;

And at night they sleep
 In the rocking deep
 Beneath the Ortygian shore :—
 Like spirits that lie
 In the azure sky
 When they love but live no more.

Pisa, 1820.

A LAMENT.

OH, world ! oh life ! oh time !
 On whose last steps I climb
 Trembling at that where I had stood before ;
 When will return the glory of your prime ?
 No more—O, never more !

Out of the day and night
 A joy has taken flight ;
 Fresh spring, and summer, and winter hoar,
 Move my faint heart with grief, but with delight
 No more—O, never more !

THE QUESTION.

I DREAMED that, as I wandered by the way,
Bare winter suddenly was changed to spring,
And gentle odours led my steps astray,
Mixed with a sound of waters murmuring
Along a shelving bank of turf, which lay
Under a copse, and hardly dared to fling
Its green arms round the bosom of the stream,
But kissed it and then fled, as thou mightest in dream.

There grew pied wind-flowers and violets,
Daisies, those pearly Arcturi of the earth,
The constellated flower that never sets;
Faint oxlips; tender bluebells, at whose birth
The sod scarce heaved; and that tall flower that wets
Its mother's face with heaven-collected tears,
When the low wind, its playmate's voice, it hears.

And in the warm hedge grew lush eglantine,
Green cow-bind and the moonlight-coloured May,
And cherry blossoms, and white cups, whose wine
Was the bright dew yet drained not by the day;
And wild roses, and ivy serpentine,
With its dark buds and leaves, wandering astray:
And flowers azure, black and streaked with gold,
Fairer than any wakened eyes behold.

And nearer to the river's trembling edge
There grew broad flag flowers, purple pranked with white,

And starry river buds among the sedge,
And floating water-lilies, broad and bright,
Which lit the oak that overhung the hedge
With moonlight beams of their own watery light;
And bulrushes, and reeds of such deep green
As soothed the dazzled eye with sober sheen.

Methought that of these visionary flowers
I made a nosegay, bound in such a way
That the same hues, which in their natural bowers
Were mingled or opposed, the like array
Kept these imprisoned children of the Hours
Within my hand,—and then, elate and gay,
I hastened to the spot whence I had come,
That I might there present it!—Oh! to whom?

LINES TO AN INDIAN AIR.

I ARISE from dreams of thee
In the first sweet sleep of night,
When the winds are breathing low,
And the stars are shining bright :
I arise from dreams of thee,
And a spirit in my feet
Has led me—who knows how ?
To thy chamber window, sweet !

The wandering airs they faint
On the dark, the silent stream—
The champak odours fail
Like sweet thoughts in a dream ;
The nightingale's complaint,
It dies upon her heart,
As I must on thine,
Beloved as thou art !

O lift me from the grass !
I die, I faint, I fail !
Let thy love in kisses rain
On my lips and eyelids pale.
My cheek is cold and white, alas !
My heart beats loud and fast,
Oh ! press it close to thine again,
Where it will break at last.

STANZAS

WRITTEN IN DEJECTION, NEAR NAPLES.

THE sun is warm, the sky is clear,
The waves are dancing fast and bright,
Blue isles and snowy mountains wear
The purple noon's transparent light
The breath of the moist earth is light
Around its unexpanded buds ;
Like many a voice of one delight,
The winds, the birds, the ocean floods,
The City's voice itself is soft, like Solitude's.

I see the Deep's untrampled floor
With green and purple seaweeds strown ;
I see the waves upon the shore,
Like light dissolved in star-showers, thrown :
I sit upon the sands alone,
The lightning of the noon-tide ocean
Is flashing round me, and a tone
Arises from its measured motion,
How sweet ! did any heart now share in my emotion.

Alas ! I have nor hope nor health,
Nor peace within nor calm around,
Nor that content surpassing wealth
The sage in meditation found,

S A

And walked with inward glory crowned—
Nor fame, nor power, nor love, nor leisure.
Others I see whom these surround—
Smiling they live and call life pleasure ;—
To me that cup has been dealt in another measure.

Yet now despair itself is mild,
Even as the winds and waters are ;
I could lie down like a tired child,
And weep away the life of care
Which I have borne and yet must bear,
Till death like sleep might steal on me,
And I might feel in the warm air
My cheek grow cold, and hear the sea
Breathe o'er my dying brain its last monotony.

Some might lament that I were cold,
As I, when this sweet day is gone,
Which my lost heart, too soon grown old,
Insults with this untimely moan ;
They might lament—for I am one
Whom men love not,—and yet regret,
Unlike this day, which when the sun
Shall on its stainless glory set,
Will linger, though enjoyed, like joy in memory yet.

December, 1818.

AUTUMN;

A DIRGE.

THE warm sun is failing, the bleak wind is waiting,
 The bare boughs are sighing, the pale flowers are dying,
 And the year
 On the earth her death-bed, in a shroud of leaves dead,
 Is lying.

Come, months, come away,
 From November to May,
 In your saddest array;
 Follow the bier
 Of the dead cold year,
 And like dim shadows watch by her sepulchre.

The chill rain is falling, the nipt worm is crawling,
 The rivers are swelling, the thunder is knelling
 For the year;
 The blithe swallows are flown, and the lizards each gone
 To his dwelling;

Come, months, come away;
 Put on white, black, and grey,
 Let your light sisters play—
 Ye, follow the bier
 Of the dead cold year,
 And make her grave green with tear on tear.

HYMN OF APOLLO.

THE sleepless Hours who watch me as I lie,
Curtained with star-enwoven tapestries,
From the broad moonlight of the sky,
Fanning the busy dreams from my dim eyes,—
Waken me when their Mother, the grey Dawn,
Tells them that dreams and that the moon is gone.

Then I arise, and climbing Heaven's blue dome,
I walk over the mountains and the waves,
Leaving my robe upon the ocean foam;
My footsteps pave the clouds with fire; the caves
Are filled with my bright presence, and the air
Leaves the green earth to my embraces bare.

The sunbeams are my shafts, with which I kill
Deceit, that loves the night and fears the day;
All men who do or even imagine ill
Fly me, and from the glory of my ray
Good minds and open actions take new might,
Until diminished by the reign of night.

I feed the clouds, the rainbows and the flowers
With their ethereal colours; the Moon's globe
And the pure stars in their eternal bowers
Are cinctured with my power as with a robe;
Whatever lamps on Earth or Heaven may shine,
Are portions of one power, which is mine.

I stand at noon upon the peak of Heaven,
Then with unwilling steps I wander down
Into the clouds of the Atlantic even ;
For grief that I depart they weep and frown :
What look is more delightful than the smile
With which I soothe them from the western isle ?

I am the eye with which the Universe
Beholds itself and knows itself divine ;
All harmony of instrument or verse,
All prophesy, all medicine are mine,
All light of art or nature ;—to my song,
Victory and praise in their own right belong.

HYMN OF PAN.

From the forests and highlands
We come, we come ;
From the river-girt islands,
Where loud waves are dumb.
Listening to my sweet pipings,
The wind in the reeds and the rushes,
The bees on the bells of thyme,
The birds on the myrtle bushes,
The cicale above in the lime,
And the lizards below in the grass,
Were as silent as ever old Tmolus* was,
Listening to my sweet pipings.

Liquid Peneus was flowing,
And all dark Tempe lay
In Pelion's shadow, outgrowing
The light of the dying day,
Speeded by my sweet pipings.
The Sileni, and Sylvans, and Fauns,
And the Nymphs of the woods and waves,
To the edge of the moist river lawns,
And the brink of dewy caves,
And all that did then attend and follow
Were silent with love, as you now, Apollo,
With envy of my sweet pipings.

* This and the former poem were written at the request of a friend to be inserted in a drama on the subject of Midas. Apollo and Pan contended before Tmolus for the prize in music.

I sang of the dancing stars,
 I sang of the dædal Earth,
 And of Heaven—and the giant wars,
 And Love, and Death, and Birth,—
 And then I changed my pipings,—
 Singing how down the vale of Menalus
 I pursued a maiden and clasped a reed :
 Gods and men, we are all deluded thus !
 It breaks in our bosom and then we bleed :
 All wept, as I think both ye now would,
 If envy or age had not frozen your blood,
 At the sorrow of my sweet pipings.

THE BOAT

ON THE SERCHIO.

OUR boat is asleep in the Serchio's stream,
Its sails are folded like thoughts in a dream,
The helm sways idly, hither and thither;
Dominic, the boat-man has brought the mast,
And the oars and the sails; but 'tis sleeping fast,
Like a beast, unconscious of its tether.

The stars burnt out in the pale blue air,
And the thin white moon lay withering there,
To tower, and cavern, and rift and tree,
The owl and the bat fled drowsily.
Day had kindled the dewy woods,
And the rocks above and the stream below,
And the vapours in their multitudes,
And the Apennine's shroud of summer snow,
And clothed with light of aery gold
The mists in their eastern caves uprolled.

Day had awakened all things that be,
The lark and the thrush and the swallow free,
And the milkmaid's song and the mower's scythe,
And the matin-bell and the mountain bee:
Fire-flies were quenched on the dewy corn,
Glow-worms went out on the river's brim,
Like lamps which a student forgets to trim:

The beetle forgot to wind his horn,
The crickets were 'still in the meadow and hill :
Like a flock of rooks at a farmer's gun
Night's dreams and terrors, every one,
Fled from the brains which are their prey,
From the lamp's death to the morning ray :

All rose to do the task He set to each,
Who shaped us to his ends and not our own ;
The million rose to learn, and one to teach
What none yet ever knew or can be known ;

And many rose
Whose woe was such that fear became desire ;—
Melchior and Lionel were not among those :
They from the throng of men had stepped aside,
And made their home under the green hill side.
It was that hill, whose intervening brow
Screens Lucca from the Pisan's envious eye,
Which the circumfluous plain waving below,
Like a wide lake of green fertility,
With streams and fields and marches bare,
Divides from the far Apennines—which lie
Islanded in the immeasurable air.

“ What think you, as she lies in her green cove,
Our little sleeping boat is dreaming of ?
If morning dreams are true, why I should guess
That she was dreaming of our idleness,
And of the miles of watery way
We should have led her by this time of day? ”—

—————"Never mind," said Lionel,
"Give care to the winds, they can bear it well
About yon poplar tops; and see
The white clouds are driving merrily,
And the stars we miss this morn will light
More willingly our return to-night.—
List, my dear fellow, the breeze blows fair;
How it scatters Dominic's long black hair,
Singing of us, and our lazy motions,
If I can guess a boat's emotions.—"

The chain is loosed, the sails are spread,
The living breath is fresh behind,
As with dews and sunrise fed,
Comes the laughing morning wind;—
The sails are full, the boat makes head
Against the Serchio's torrent fierce,
Then flags with intermitting course,
And hangs upon the wave, []
Which fervid from its mountain source
Shallow, smooth and strong doth come,—
Swift as fire, tempestuously
It sweeps into the affrighted sea;
In morning's smile its eddies coil,
Its billows sparkle, toss and boil,
Torturing all its quiet light
Into columns fierce and bright.

The Serchio, twisting forth
Between the marble barriers which it clove
At Ripafratta, leads through the dread chasm

The wave that died the death which lovers love,
Living in what it sought ; as if this spasm
Had not yet past, the toppling mountains cling,
But the clear stream in full enthusiasm
Pours itself on the plain, until wandering,
Down one clear path of effluence chrystalline
Sends its clear waves, that they may fling
At Arno's feet tribute of corn and wine,
Then, through the pestilential desarts wild
Of tangled marsh and woods of stunted fire,
It rushes to the Ocean.

July, 1821.

THE ZUCCA.*

I.

SUMMER was dead and Autumn was expiring,
 And infant Winter laughed upon the land
 All cloudlessly and cold ;—when I, desiring
 More in this world than any understand,
 Wept o'er the beauty, which like sea retiring,
 Had left the earth bare as the wave-worn sand
 Of my poor heart, and o'er the grass and flowers
 Pale for the falsehood of the flattering hours.

II.

Summer was dead, but I yet lived to weep
 The instability of all but weeping ;
 And on the earth lulled in her winter sleep
 I woke, and envied her as she was sleeping.
 Too happy Earth ! over thy face shall creep
 The wakening vernal airs, until thou, leaping
 From unremembered dreams, shalt [] see
 No death divide thy immortality.

III.

I loved—O no, I mean not one of ye,
 Or any earthly one, though ye are dear
 As human heart to human heart may be ;—
 I loved, I know not what—but this low sphere

* Pumpkin.

And all that it contains, contains not thee,
Thou, whom seen no where, I feel every where,
Dim object of my soul's idolatry.
Veiled art thou like—

IV.

By heaven and Earth, from all whose shapes thou flowest,
Neither to be contained, delayed, or hidden,
Making divine the loftiest and the lowest,
When for a moment thou art not forbidden
To live within the life which thou bestowest ;
And leaving noblest things vacant and chidden,
Cold as a corpse after the spirit's flight,
Blank as the sun after the birth of night.

V.

In winds, and trees, and streams, and all things common,
In music and the sweet unconscious tone
Of animals, and voices which are human,
Meant to express some feelings of their own ;
In the soft motions and rare smile of woman,
In flowers and leaves, and in the fresh grass shewn,
Or dying in the autumn, I the most
Adore thee present or lament thee lost.

VI.

And thus I went, lamenting when I saw
A plant upon the river's margin lie,
Like one who loved beyond his Nature's law,
And in despair had cast him down to die ;

Its leaves which had outlived the frost, the thaw
 Had blighted as a heart which hatred's eye
 Can blast not, but which pity kills ; the dew
 Lay on its spotted leaves like tears too true.

VII.

The Heavens had wept upon it, but the Earth
 Had crushed it on her unmaternal breast.

* * * * *

VIII.

I bore it to my chamber, and I planted
 It in a vase full of the lightest mould ;
 The winter beams which out of Heaven slanted
 Fell through the window panes, disrobed of cold,
 Upon its leaves and flowers ; the star which panted
 In evening for the Day, whose car has rolled
 Over the horizon's wave, with looks of light
 Smiled on it from the threshold of the night.

IX.

The mitigated influences of air
 And light revived the plant, and from it grew
 Strong leaves and tendrils, and its flowers fair,
 Full as a cup with the vine's burning dew,
 O'erflowed with golden colours ; an atmosphere
 Of vital warmth infolded it anew,
 And every impulse sent to every part
 The unbeheld pulsations of its heart.

X.

Well might the plant grow beautiful and strong,
 Even if the sun and air had smiled not on it ;
 For one wept o'er it all the winter long
 Tears pure as Heaven's rain, which fell upon it
 Hour after hour ; for sounds of softest song
 Mixed with the stringed melodies that won it
 To leave the gentle lips on which it slept,
 Had loosed the heart of him who sat and wept.

XI.

Had loosed his heart, and shook the leaves and flowers
 On which he wept, the while the savage storm
 Waked by the darkest of December's hours
 Was raving round the chamber hushed and warm ;
 The birds were shivering in their leafless bowers,
 The fish were frozen in the pools, the form
 Of every summer plant was dead []
 Whilst this * * *

January, 1822.

THE TWO SPIRITS.

AN ALLEGORY.

FIRST SPIRIT.

Oh thou, who plumed with strong desire
Wouldst float above the earth, beware!
A Shadow tracks thy flight of fire—
Night is coming !
Bright are the regions of the air,
And among the winds and Beams
It were delight to wander there—
Night is coming !

SECOND SPIRIT.

The deathless stars are bright above ;
If I would cross the shade of night,
Within my heart is the lamp of love,
And that is day !
And the moon will smile with gentle light
On my golden plumes where'er they move ;
The meteors will linger round my flight
And make night day.

FIRST SPIRIT.

But if the whirlwinds of darkness waken
Hail and lightning and stormy rain ;
See the bounds of the air are shaken—
Night is coming !

The red swift clouds of the hurricane
 Yon declining sun have overtaken,
 The clash of the hail sweeps over the plain—
 Night is coming !

SECOND SPIRIT.

I see the light, and I hear the sound ;
 I'll sail on the flood of the tempest dark
 With the calm within and the light around
 Which makes night day :
 And thou, when the gloom is deep and stark,
 Look from thy dull earth, slumber-bound,
 My moon-like flight thou then may'st mark
 On high, far away.

Some say, there is a precipice
 Where one vast pine is frozen to ruin
 O'er piles of snow and chasms of ice
 Mid Alpine mountains ;
 And that the languid storm pursuing
 That winged shape for ever flies
 Round those hoar branches, aye renewing
 Its very fountains.

Some say, when nights are dry and clear,
 And the death dews sleep on the morass,
 Sweet whispers are heard by the traveller
 Which makes night day :
 And a silver shape like his early love doth pass
 Upborne by her wild and glittering hair,
 And when he awakes on the fragrant grass,
 He finds night day.

A FRAGMENT.

THEY were two cousins, almost like to twins,
Except that from the catalogue of sins
Nature had razed their love—which could not be
But by dissevering their nativity.
And so they grew together, like two flowers
Upon one stem, which the same beams and showers
Lull or awaken in their purple prime,
Which the same hand will gather—the same clime
Shake with decay. This fair day smiles to see
All those who love,—and who ever loved like thee,
Fiordispina ? Scarcely Cosimo,
Within whose bosom and whose brain now glow
The ardours of a vision which obscure
The very idol of its portraiture ;
He faints, dissolved into a sense of love ;
But thou art as a planet sphered above,
But thou art Love itself—the ruling motion
Of his subjected spirit—such emotion
Must end in sin and sorrow, if sweet May
Had not brought forth this morn—your wedding day.

A BRIDAL SONG.

THE golden gates of sleep unbar
 Where strength and beauty met together,
 Kindle their image like a star
 In a sea of glassy weather.
 Night, with all thy stars look down,—
 Darkness, weep thy holiest dew,—
 Never smiled the inconstant moon
 On a pair so true.
 Let eyes not see their own delight,—
 Haste, swift Hour, and thy flight
 Oft renew.

Fairies, sprites, and angels keep her !
 Holy stars, permit no wrong !
 And return to wake the sleeper,
 Dawn,—ere it be long.
 Oh joy ! oh fear ! what will be done
 In the absence of the sun !
 Come along !

THE SUNSET.

THERE late was One within whose subtle being,
As light and wind within some delicate cloud
That fades amid the blue noon's burning sky,
Genius and youth contended. None may know
The sweetness of the joy which made his breath
Fail, like the trances of the summer air,
When, with the Lady of his love, who then
First knew the unreserve of mingled being,
He walked along the pathway of a field
Which to the east a hoar wood shadowed o'er
But to the west was open to the sky.
There now the sun had sunk, but lines of gold
Hung on the ashen clouds, and on the points
Of the far level grass and nodding flowers
And the old dandelion's hoary beard,
And, mingled with the shades of twilight, lay
On the brown massy woods—and in the east
The broad and burning moon lingeringly rose
Between the black trunks of the crowded trees,
While the faint stars were gathering overhead.—
“Is it not strange, Isabel,” said the youth,
“I never saw the sun? We will walk here
To-morrow; thou shalt look on it with me.”

That night the youth and lady mingled lay
In love and sleep—but when the morning came
The lady found her lover dead and cold.

Let none believe that God in mercy gave
That stroke. The lady died not, nor grew wild,
But year by year lived on—in truth I think
Her gentleness and patience and sad smiles,
And that she did not die, but lived to tend
Her aged father, were a kind of madness,
If madness 'tis to be unlike the world.
For but to see her were to read the tale
Woven by some subtlest bard, to make hard hearts
Dissolve away in wisdom-working grief;—
Her eyelashes were worn away with tears,
Her lips and cheeks were like things dead—so pale;
Her hands were thin, and through their wandering veins
And weak articulations might be seen
Day's ruddy light. The tomb of thy dead self
Which one vexed ghost inhabits, night and day,
Is all, lost child, that now remains of thee!

“ Inheritor of more than earth can give,
Passionless calm, and silence unreprieved,
Whether the dead find, oh, not sleep! but rest,
And are the uncomplaining things they seem,
Or live, or drop in the deep sea of Love;
Oh, that like thine, mine epitaph were—Peace!”
This was the only moan she ever made.

1816.

SONG,

ON A FADED VIOLET.

THE odour from the flower is gone,
Which like thy kisses breathed on me;
The colour from the flower is flown,
Which glowed of thee, and only thee!

A shrivelled, lifeless, vacant form,
It lies on my abandoned breast,
And mocks the heart which yet is warm
With cold and silent rest.

I weep—my tears revive it not!
I sigh—it breathes no more on me;
Its mute and uncomplaining lot
Is such as mine should be.

LINES TO A CRITIC.

HONEY from silk-worms who can gather,
Or silk from the yellow bee ?
The grass may grow in winter weather
As soon as hate in me.

Hate men who cant, and men who pray,
And men who rail like thee :
An equal passion to repay
They are not coy like me.

Or seek some slave of power and gold,
To be thy dear heart's mate ;
Thy love will move that bigot cold,
Sooner than me, thy hate.

A passion like the one I prove
Cannot divided be ;
I hate thy want of truth and love—
How should I then hate thee ?

December, 1817.

GOOD NIGHT.

Good night ? ah ! no ; the hour is ill
Which severs those it should unite ;
Let us remain together still,
Then it will be *good* night.

How can I call the lone night good,
Though thy sweet wishes wing its flight ?
Be it not said, thought, understood,
Then it will be *good* night. '

To hearts which near each other move
From evening close to morning light,
That night is good ; because, my love,
They never *say* good night.

MAZENGLI.*

Oh ! foster-nurse of man's abandoned glory,
Since Athens, its great mother, sunk in splendour ;
Thou shadowest forth that mighty shape in story,
As ocean its wrecked fanes, severe yet tender :—
The light-invested angel Poesy
Was drawn from the dim world to welcome thee.

And thou in painting didst transcribe all taught
By loftiest meditations ; marble knew
The sculptor's fearless soul—and as he wrought,
The grace of his own power and freedom grew.
And more than all, heroic, just, sublime
Thou wert among the false—was this thy crime ?

Yes ; and on Pisa's marble walls the twine
Of direst weeds hangs garlanded—the snake
Inhabits its wrecked palaces ;—in thine
A beast of subtler venom now doth make
Its lair, and sits amid their glories overthrown,
And thus thy victim's fate is as thine own.

* This fragment refers to an event, told in Sismondi's *Histoire des Républiques Italiennes*, which occurred during the war when Florence finally subdued Pisa, and reduced it to a province. The opening stanzas are addressed to the conquering city.

The sweetest flowers are ever frail and rare,
And love and freedom blossom but to wither;
And good and ill like vines entangled are,
So that their grapes may oft be plucked together;—
Divide the vintage ere thou drink, then make
Thy heart rejoice for dead Mazenghi's sake.

No record of his crime remains in story,
But if the morning bright as evening shone,
It was some high and holy deed, by glory
Pursued into forgetfulness, which won
From the blind crowd he made secure and free
The patriot's meed, toil, death, and infamy.

For when by sound of trumpet was declared
A price upon his life, and there was set
A penalty of blood on all who shared
So much of water with him as might wet
His lips, which speech divided not—he went
Alone, as you may guess, to banishment.

Amid the mountains, like a hunted beast,
He hid himself, and hunger, cold, and toil,
Month after month endured; it was a feast
Whene'er he found those globes of deep red gold
Which in the woods the strawberry-tree doth bear,
Suspended in their emerald atmosphere.

And in the roofless huts of vast morasses,
Deserted by the fever-stricken serf,
All overgrown with reeds and long rank grasses,
And hillocks heaped of moss-inwoven turf,

And where the huge and speckled aloe made,
Rooted in stones, a broad and pointed shade,

He housed himself. There is a point of strand
Near Vada's tower and town; and on one side
The treacherous marsh divides it from the land,
Shadowed by pine and ilex forests wide,
And on the other creeps eternally,
Through muddy weeds, the shallow, sullen sea.

Naples, 1818

THE WOODMAN AND THE NIGHTINGALE.

A WOODMAN whose rough heart was out of tune
(I think such hearts yet never came to good)
Hated to hear, under the stars or moon

One nightingale in an interfluous wood
Sate the hungry dark with melody ;—
And as a vale is watered by a flood,

Or as the moonlight fills the open sky
Struggling with darkness—as a tuberosé
Peoples some Indian dell with scents which lie

Like clouds above the flower from which they rose,
The singing of that happy nightingale
In this sweet forest, from the golden close

Of evening, till the star of dawn may fail,
Was interfused upon the silentness ;
The folded roses and the violets pale

Heard her within their slumbers, the abyss
Of heaven with all its planets ; the dull ear
Of the night-cradled earth ; the loneliness

Of the circumfluous waters,—every sphere
And every flower and beam and cloud and wave
And every wind of the mute atmosphere,

And every beast stretched in its rugged cave,
And every bird lulled on its mossy bough,
And every silver moth fresh from the grave,

Which is its cradle—ever from below
Aspiring like one who loves too fair, too far,
To be consumed within the purest glow

Of one serene and unapproached star,
As if it were a lamp of earthly light,
Unconscious, as some human lovers are,

Itself how low, how high beyond all height
The heaven where it would perish!—and every form
That worshipped in the temple of the night

Was awed into delight, and by the charm
Girt as with an interminable zone,
Whilst that sweet bird, whose music was a storm

Of sound, shook forth the dull oblivion
Out of their dreams; harmony became love
In every soul but one

And so this man returned with axe and saw
At evening close from killing the tall treen,
The soul of whom by nature's gentle law

Was each a wood-nymph, and kept ever green
The pavement and the roof of the wild copse,
Chequering the sunlight of the blue serene

With jagged leaves,—and from the forest tops
Singing the winds to sleep—or weeping oft
Fast showers of aerial water drops

Into their mother's bosom, sweet and soft,
Nature's pure tears which have no bitterness;—
Around the cradles of the birds aloft

They spread themselves into the loveliness
Of fan-like leaves, and over palid flowers
Hang like moist clouds :—or, where high branches kiss,

Make a green space among the silent bowers,
Like a vast fane in a metropolis,
Surrounded by the columns and the towers

All overwrought with branch-like traceries
In which there is religion—and the mute
Persuasion of unkindled melodies,

Odours and gleams and murmurs, which the lute
Of the blind pilot-spirit of the blast
Stirs as it sails, now grave and now acute,

Wakening the leaves and waves ere it has past
To such brief unison as on the brain
One tone, which never can recur, has cast,

One accent never to return again.

LINES.

WRITTEN ON HEARING THE NEWS OF THE DEATH OF NAPOLEON.

What ! alive and so bold, oh earth ?
Art thou not overbold ?
What ! leapest thou forth as of old
In the light of thy morning mirth,
The last of the flock of the starry fold ?
Ha ! leapest thou forth as of old ?
Are not the limbs still when the ghost is fled,
And canst thou move, Napoleon being dead ?

How ! is not thy quick heart cold
What spark is alive on thy hearth ?
How ! is not *his* death-knell knolled ?
And livest *thou* still, Mother Earth ?
Thou wert warming thy fingers old
O'er the embers covered and cold
Of that most fiery spirit, when it fled—
What, Mother, do you laugh now he is dead ?

“ Who has known me of old,” replied Earth,
“ Or who has my story told ?
It is thou who art overbold.”
And the lightning of scorn laughed forth
As she sung, “ to my bosom I fold
All my sons when their knell is knolled,
And so with living motion all are fed,
And the quick spring like weeds out of the dead.

" Still alive and still bold," shouted Earth,
" I grow bolder and still more bold.
The dead fill me ten thousand fold
Fuller of speed, and splendour, and mirth,
I was cloudy, and sullen, and cold,
Like a frozen chaos uprolled,
Till by the spirit of the mighty dead
My heart grew warm. I feed on whom I fed.

Aye, alive and still bold," muttered Earth,
" Napoleon's fierce spirit rolled,
In terror and blood and gold,
A torrent of ruin to death from his birth.
Leave the millions who follow to mould
The metal before it be cold ;
And weave into his shame, which like the dead
Shrouds me, the hopes that from his glory fled.

ODE TO NAPLES.*

EPODE I. α.

I stood within the city disinterred ; †
And heard the autumnal leaves like light footfalls
Of spirits passing through the streets ; and heard
The Mountain's slumberous voice, at intervals
Thrill through those roofless halls ;
The oracular thunder penetrating shook
The listening soul in my suspended blood ;
I felt that Earth out of her deep heart spoke .
I felt, but heard not :—through white columns glowed
The isle-sustaining Ocean-flood,

* The Author has connected many recollections of his visit to Pompeii and Baïæ with the enthusiasm excited by the intelligence of the proclamation of a Constitutional Government at Naples. This has given a tinge of picturesque and descriptive imagery to the introductory Epodes which depict these scenes, and some of the majestic feelings permanently connected with the scene of this animating event.

Author's Note.

† Pompeii.

A plane of light between two Heavens of azure :
 Around me gleamed many a bright sepulchre
 Of whose pure beauty, Time, as if his pleasure
 Were to spare Death, had never made erasure ;
 But every living lineament was clear
 As in the sculptor's thought ; and there
 The wreathes of stony myrtle, ivy and pine,
 Like winter leaves o'ergrown by moulded snow,
 Seemed only not to move and grow
 Because the crystal silence of the air
 Weighed on their life ; even as the Power divine
 Which then lulled all things, brooded upon mine.

EPODE II. a.

Then gentle winds arose
 With many a mingled close
 Of wild Æolian sound and mountain odour keen ;
 And where the Baian ocean
 Welters with airlike motion,
 Within, above, around its bowers of starry green,
 Moving the sea flowers in those purple caves
 Even as the ever stormless atmosphere
 Floats o'er the Elysian realm,
 It bore me like an Angel, o'er the waves
 Of sunlight, whose swift pinnace of dewy air
 No storm can overwhelm ;
 I sailed, where ever flows
 Under the calm Serene

A spirit of deep emotion
 From the unknown graves
 Of the dead kings of Melody.*
 Shadowy Aornos darkened o'er the helm
 The horizontal æther ; heaven stript bare
 Its depths over Elysium, where the prow
 Made the invisible water white as snow ;
 From that Typhæan mount, Inarime
 There streamed a sunlike vapour, like the standard
 Of some ethereal host ;
 Whilst from all the coast,
 Louder and louder, gathering round, there wandered
 Over the oracular woods and divine sea
 Propesyings which grew articulate—
 They seize me—I must speak them—be they fate !

STROPHE α. I.

Naples ! thou Heart of men which ever pantest
 Naked, beneath the lidless eye of heaven !
 Elysian City which to calm enchantest
 The mutinous air and sea : they round thee, even
 As sleep round Love, are driven !
 Metropolis of a ruined Paradise
 Long lost, late won, and yet but half regained !
 Bright Altar of the bloodless sacrifice,
 • Which armed Victory offers up unstained
 To Love, the flower-enchained !
 Thou which wert once, and then didst cease to be,
 * Homer and Virgil.

Now art, and henceforth ever shalt be, free,
 If Hope, and Truth, and Justice can avail,
 Hail, hail, all hail !

STROPHE β . 2.

Thou youngest giant birth
 Which from the groaning earth
 Leaps't, clothed in armour of impenetrable scale !
 Last, of the Intercessors !
 Who 'gainst the Crowned Transgressors
 Pleadest before God's love ! Arrayed in Wisdom's mail,
 Wave thy lightning lance in mirth
 Nor let thy high heart fail,
 Though from their hundred gates the leagued Oppressors,
 With hurried legions move !
 Hail, hail, all hail !

ANTISTROPHE α .

What though Cimmerian Anarchs dare blaspheme
 Freedom and thee ? thy shield is as a mirror
 To make their blind slaves see, and with fierce gleam
 To turn his hungry sword upon the wearer,
 A new Acteon's error
 Shall their's have been—devoured by their own hounds !
 Be thou like the imperial Basilisk
 Killing thy foe with unapparent wounds !
 Gaze on oppression, till at that dread risk

X

Aghast she pass from the Earth's disk,
 Fear not, but gaze—for freemen mightier grow,
 And slaves more feeble, gazing on their foe ;
 If Hope and Truth and Justice may avail,
 Thou shalt be great—all hail !

ANTISTROPHE β . 2.

From Freedom's form divine,
 From Nature's inmost shrine,
 Strip every impious gawd, rend Error veil by veil
 O'er Ruin desolate,
 O'er Falsehood's fallen state
 Sit thou sublime, unawed : be the Destroyer pale !
 And equal laws be thine,
 And winged words let sail,
 Freight'd with truth even from the throne of God :
 That wealth, surviving fate,
 Be thine.—All hail !

ANTISTROPHE α . 7.

Didst thou not start to hear Spain's thrilling pean
 From land to land re-echoed solemnly,
 Till silence became music ? From the *Æean**
 To the cold Alps, eternal Italy
 Starts to hear thine ! The Sea
 Which paves the desert streets of Venice laughs
 In light and music ; widowed Genoa wail
 * *Æea*, the island of Circe.

By moonlight spells ancestral epitaphs,
 Murmuring, where is Doria ? fair Milan,
 Within whose veins long ran
 The vipers† palsyng venom, lifts her heel
 To bruise his head. The signal and the seal
 (If Hope and Truth and Justice can avail)
 Art Thou of all these hopes.—O hail !

ANTISTROPHE β. γ.

Florence ! beneath the sun,
 Of cities fairest one,
 Blushes within her bower for Freedom's expectation :
 From eyes of quenchless hope
 Rome tears the priestly cope,
 As ruling once by power, so now by admiration,
 An athlete stript to run
 From a remoter station
 For the high prize lost on Philippi's shore :—
 As then Hope, Truth, and Justice did avail,
 So now may Fraud and Wrong ! O hail !

EPODE I, β.

Hear ye the march as of the Earth-born Forms
 Arrayed against the everliving Gods ?
 The crash and darkness of a thousand storms

† The viper was the armorial device of the Visconti, tyrant of Milan.

Bursting their inaccessible abodes
 Of crags and thunder-clouds ?
 See ye the banners blazoned to the day
 Inwrought with emblems of barbaric pride ?
 Dissonant threats kill Silence far away,
 The serene Heaven which wraps our Eden wide
 With iron light is dyed,
 The Anarchs of the North lead forth their legions
 Like Chaos o'er creation, uncreating ;
 An hundred tribes nourished on strange religions
 And lawless slaveries,— down the aerial regions
 Of the white Alps, desolating,
 Famished wolves that bide no waiting,
 Blotting the glowing footsteps of old glory,
 Trampling our columned cities into dust,
 Their dull and savage lust
 On Beauty's corse to sickness antiating—
 They come ! The fields they tread look black and hoary
 With fire—from their red feet the streams run gory !

EPODE II. β.

Great Spirit, deepest Love !
 Which rulest and dost move
 All things which live and are, within the Italian shore ;
 Who spreadest heaven around it ,
 Whose woods, rocks, waves, surround it ;
 Who sittest in thy star, o'er Ocean's western floor,
 Spirit of beauty ! at whose soft command
 The sunbeams and the showers distil its foison

From the Earth's bosom chill;
O bid those beams be each a blinding brand
Of lightning ! bid those showers be dews of poison !
 Bid the Earth's plenty kill !
 Bid thy bright Heaven above,
 Whilst light and darkness bound it,
 Be their tomb who planned
 To make it ours and thine !
Or, with thine harmonizing ardours fill
And raise thy sons, as o'er the prone horizon
Thy lamp feeds every twilight wave with fire—
Be man's high hope and unextinct desire,
The instrument to work thy will divine !
Then clouds from sunbeams, antelopes from leopards,
 And frowns and fears from Thee,
 Would not more swiftly flee
Than Celtic wolves from the Ausonian shepherds.—
 Whatever, Spirit, from thy starry shrine
 Thou yieldest or withholdest, Oh let be
 This city of thy worship ever free !

September, 1820.

MONT BLANC

LINES WRITTEN IN THE VALE OF CHAMOUNI

I

The everlasting universe of things
Flows through the mind, and rolls its rapid waves,
Now dark—now glittering—now reflecting gloom—
Now lending splendour, where from secret springs
The source of human thought its tribute brings
Of waters,—with a sound but half its own,
Such as a feeble brook will oft assume
In the wild woods, among the mountains lone,
Where waterfalls around it leap for ever,
Where woods and winds contend, and a vast river
Over its rocks carelessly bursts and raves.

II.

Thus thou, Ravine of Arve—dark, deep Ravine—
Thou many-coloured, many-voiced vale,
Over whose pines and crags and caverns sail
Fast clouds, shadows, and sunbeams : awful scene,
Where Power in likeness of the Arve comes down
From the ice gulphs that gird his secret throne,

Bursting through these dark mountains like the flame
Of lightning thro' the tempest;—thou dost lie,
Thy giant brood of pines around thee clinging,
Children of elder time, in whose devotion
The chainless winds still come and ever came
To drink their odours, and their mighty swinging
To hear—an old and solemn harmony :
Thine earthly rainbows stretched across the sweep
Of the ethereal waterfall, whose veil
Robes some unsculptured image; the strange sleep
Which, when the voices of the desert fail,
Wraps all in its own deep eternity ;—
Thy caverns echoing to the Arve's commotion
A loud, lone sound, no other sound can tame ;
Thou art pervaded with that ceaseless motion,
Thou art the path of that unresting sound—
Dizzy Ravine ! and when I gaze on thee
I seem as in a trance sublime and strange
To muse on my own separate phantasy,
My own, my human mind, which passively
Now renders and receives fast influencings,
Holding an unremitting interchange ..
With the clear universe of things around ;
One legion of wild thoughts, whose wandering wings
Now float above thy darkness, and now rest
Where that or thou art no unbidden guest,
In the still cave of the witch Poesy,
Seeking among the shadows that pass by
Ghosts of all things that are, some shade of thee,
Some phantom, some faint image : till the breast
From which they fled recalls them, thou art there !

III.

Some say that gleams of a remoter world
Visit the soul in sleep,—that death is slumber,
And that its shapes the busy thoughts outnumber
Of those who wake and live,—I look on high ;
Has some unknown omnipotence unfurled
The veil of life and death ? or do I lie
In dream, and does the mightier world of sleep
Spread far around and inaccessible
Its circles ? For the very spirit fails,
Driven like a homeless cloud from steep to steep
That vanishes among the viewless gales !
Far, far above, piercing the infinite sky
Mont Blanc appears,—still, snowy, and serene—
Its subject mountains their unearthly forms
Pile around it, ice and rock ; broad vales between
Of frozen floods, unfathomable deeps,
Blue as the overhanging heaven, that spread
And wind among the accumulated steeps ;
A desert peopled by the storms alone,
Save when the eagle brings some hunter's bone,
And the wolf tracks her there—how hideously
Its shapes are heaped around ! rude, bare, and high,
Ghastly, and scarred, and riven,—Is this the scene
Where the old Earthquake-dæmon taught her young
Ruin ? Were these their toys ? or did a sea
Of fire envelope once this silent snow ?
None can reply—all seems eternal now.
The wilderness has a mysterious tongue
Which teaches awful doubt, or faith so mild,

So solemn, so serene, that man may be
But for such faith with nature reconciled ;
Thou hast a voice, great Mountain, to repeal
Large codes of fraud and woe : not understood
By all, but which the wise, and great, and good
Interpret, or make felt, or deeply feel.

IV.

The fields, the lakes, the forests, and the streams,
Ocean, and all the living things that dwell
Within the dædal earth ; lightning, and rain,
Earthquake, and fiery flood, and hurricane,
The torpor of the year when feeble dreams
Visit the hidden buds, or dreamless sleep
Holds every future leaf and flower ;— the bound
With which from that detested trance they leap ;
The works and ways of man, their death and birth,
And that of him and all that his may be ;
All things that move and breathe with toil and sound
Are born and die, revolve, subside and swell.
Power dwells apart in its tranquillity
Remote, serene, and inaccessible :
And *this*, the naked countenance of earth,
On which I gaze, even these primæval mountains,
Teach the adverting mind, The glaciers creep
Like snakes that watch their prey, from their far fountains,
Slow rolling on ; there, many a precipice
Frost and the Sun in scorn of mortal power
Have piled—dome, pyramid, and pinnacle ,
A city of death, distinct with many a tower

And wall impregnable of beaming ice.
Yet not a city, but a flood of ruin
Is there, that from the boundaries of the sky
Rolls its perpetual stream ; vast pines are strewing
Its destined path, or in the mangled soil
Branchless and shattered stand ; the rocks, drawn down
From yon remotest waste, have overthrown
The limits of the dead and living world,
Never to be reclaimed. The dwelling-place
Of insects, beasts, and birds becomes its spoil ;
Their food and their retreat for ever gone,
So much of life and joy is lost. The race
Of man flies far in dread : his work and dwelling
Vanish, like smoke before the tempest's stream,
And their place is not known. Below, vast caves
Shine in the rushing torrent's restless gleam,
Which from those secret chasms in tumult swelling
Meet in the vale, and one majestic River,
The breath and blood of distant lands, for ever
Rolls its loud waters to the ocean waves,
Breathes its swift vapours to the circling air.

V,

Mont Blanc yet gleams on high :—the power is there,
The still and solemn power of many sights
And many sounds, and much of life and death.
In the calm darkness of the moonless nights,
In the lone glare of day, the snows descend
Upon that Mountain ; none behold them there,
Nor when the flakes burn in the sinking sun,

Or the star-beams dart through them :—Winds contend
Silently there, and heap the snow with breath
Rapid and strong, but silently ! Its home
The voiceless lightning in these solitudes
Keeps innocently, and like vapour broods
Over the snow. The secret strength of things
Which governs thought, and to the infinite dome
Of heaven is as a law, inhabits thee !
And what wert thou, and earth, and stars, and sea,
If to the human mind's imaginings
Silence and solitude were vacancy ?

Switzerland, June 23, 1816.

ON THE MEDUSA OF LEONARDO DA VINCI,

IN THE FLORENTINE GALLERY.

It lieth, gazing on the midnight sky,
Upon the cloudy mountain peak supine ;
Below, far lands are seen tremblingly ;
Its horror and its beauty are divine.
Upon its lips and eyelids seems to lie
Loveliness like a shadow, from which shrine,
Fiery and lurid, struggling underneath,
The agonies of anguish and of death.

Yet it is less the horror than the grace
Which turns the gazer's spirit into stone ;
Whereon the lineaments of that dead face
Are graven, till the characters be grown
Into itself, and thought no more can trace ;
'Tis the melodious hue of beauty thrown
Athwart the darkness and the glare of pain,
Which humanize and harmonize the strain.

And from its head as from one body grow,
As [] grass out of a watery rock,
Hairs which are vipers, and they curl and flow
And their long tangles in each other lock,
And with unending involutions shew
Their mailed radiance, as it were to mock
The torture and the death within, and saw
The solid air with many a ragged jaw.

And from a stone beside a poisonous est
 Peeps idly into those Gorgonian eyes ;
 Whilst in the air a ghastly bat, bereft
 Of sense, has flitted with a mad surprise
 Out of the cave this hideous light had cleft, *
 And he comes hastening like a moth that hies
 After a taper ; and the midnight sky
 Flares, a light more dread than obscurity.

*Tis the tempestuous loveliness of terror ;
 For from the serpents gleams a brazen glare
 Kindled by that inextricable error,
 Which makes a thrilling vapour of the air
 Become a [] and evershifting mirror
 Of all the beauty and the terror there—
 A woman's countenance, with serpent locks,
 Gazing in death on heaven from those wet rocks.

Florence, 1819.

A LAMENT.

SWIFTER far than summer's flight,
Swifter far than youth's delight,
Swifter far than happy night,
 Art thou come and gone ;
As the earth when leaves are dead,
As the night when sleep is sped,
As the heart when joy is fled,
 I am left lone, alone.

The swallow Summer comes again,
The owl Night resumes her reign,
But the wild swan Youth is fain
 To fly with thee, false as thou.
My heart each day desires the morrow,
Sleep itself is turned to sorrow,
Vainly would my winter borrow
 Sunny leaves from any bough.

Lilies for a bridal bed,
Roses for a matron's head
Violets for a maiden dead,
 Pansies let my flowers be :
On the living grave I bear,
Scatter them without a tear,
Let no friend, however dear,
 Waste one hope, one fear for me.

THE PINE FOREST

OF THE CASCINE, NEAR PISA.

DEAREST, best and brightest,
Come away,
To the woods and to the fields !
Dearer than this fairest day,
Which like thee to those in sorrow,
Comes to bid a sweet good-morrow
To the rough year just awake
In its cradle in the brake,

The eldest of the hours of spring,
Into the winter wandering,
Looks upon the leafless wood ;
And the banks all bare and rude
Found it seems this halcyon morn,
In February's bosom born,
Bending from heaven, in azure mirth,
Kissed the cold forehead of the earth,
And smiled upon the silent sea,
And bade the frozen streams be free ;
And waked to music all the fountains,
And breathed upon the rigid mountains,
And made the wintry world appear
Like one on whom thou smilest, dear.

Radiant Sister of the Day,
Awake ! arise ! and come away !
To the wild woods and the plains
To the pools where winter rains
Image all the roof of leaves,
Where the Pine its garland weaves,
Sapless, grey, and ivy dun
Round stones that never kiss the sun,
To the sandhills of the sea
Where the earliest violets be.

Now the last day of many days,
All beautiful and bright as thou,
The loveliest and the last, is dead,
Rise Memory and write its praise,
And do thy wonted work and trace
The epitaph of glory fled :
For the Earth hath changed its face,
A frown is on the Heaven's brow.

We wandered to the Pine Forest
That skirts the Ocean's foam,
The lightest wind was in its nest,
The tempest in its home.

The whispering waves were half asleep,
The clouds were gone to play,
And on the woods, and on the deep,
The smiles of Heaven lay.

It seemed as if the day were one
Sent from beyond the skies,
Which shed to earth above the sun
A light of Paradise.

We paused amid the Pines that stood
The giants of the waste,
Tortured by storms to shapes as rude,
With stems like serpents interlaced.

How calm it was—the silence there
By such a chain was bound,
That even the busy woodpecker
Made stiller by her sound

The inviolable quietness ;
The breath of peace we drew,
With its soft motion made not less
The calm that round us grew.

It seemed that from the remotest seat
Of the white mountain's waste,
To the bright flower beneath our feet,
A magic circle traced ;—

A spirit interfused around,
A thinking silent life,
To momentary peace it bound
Our mortal Nature's strife,—

For still it seemed the centre of
The magic circle there,
Was one whose being filled with love
The breathless atmosphere.

Were not the crocusses that grew
Under that ilex tree,
As beautiful in scent and hue
As ever fed the bee ?

We stood beside the pools that lie
Under the forest bough,
And each seemed like a sky
Gulphed in a world below :—

A purple firmament of light,
Which in the dark earth lay,
More boundless than the depth of night;
And clearer than the day—

In which the massy forests grew,
As in the upper air,
More perfect both in shape and hue
Than any waving there,

Like one beloved, the scene had lent
To the dark water's breast
Its every leaf and lineament
With that clear truth expressed.

There lay far glades and neighbouring lawn,
And through the dark green crowd
The white sun twinkling like the dawn
Under a speckled cloud.

Sweet views, which in our world above
Can never well be seen,
Were imaged by the water's love
Of that fair forest green.

And all was interfused beneath
Within an Elysium air,
An atmosphere without a breath,
A silence sleeping there.

Until a wandering wind crept by,
Like an unwelcome thought,
Which from my mind's too faithful eye
Blots thy bright image out.

For thou art good and dear and kind,
The forest ever green,
But less of peace in S——'s mind,
Than calm in waters seen.

February 2, 1822.

THE FUGITIVES.

I.

THE waters are flashing,
The white hail is dashing,
The lightnings are glancing,
The hoar-spray is dancing—
Away!

The whirlwind is rolling,
The thunder is tolling,
The forest is swinging,
The minster bells ringing—
Come away!

The Earth is like Ocean,
Wreck-strewn and in motion :
Bird, beast, man and worm
Have crept out of the storm—
Come away!

II.

“ Our boat has one sail,
And the helmsman is pale ;—
A bold pilot I trow,
Who should follow us now,”—
Shouted He—

And she cried : " Ply the oar !
Put off gaily from shore !"—
As she spoke, bolts of death
Mixed with hail, specked their path
O'er the sea.

And from isle, tower and rock,
The blue beacon cloud broke,
And though dumb in the blast,
The red cannon flashed fast
From the lee.

III.

" And, fear's thou, and fear'st thou ?
And, see'st thou, and hear'st thou ?
And, drive we not free
O'er the terrible sea,
I and thou ?"

One boat-cloak did cover
The loved and the lover—
Their blood beats one measure,
They murmur proud pleasure
Soft and low ;—

While around the lashed Ocean,
Like mountains in motion,
Is withdrawn and uplifted,
Sunk, shattered and shifted
To and fro.

IV.

In the court of the fortress
Beside the pale portress,
Like a blood-hound well beaten,
The bridegroom stands, eaten
By shame :

On the topmost watch-turret,
As a death-boding spirit,
Stands the grey tyrant father,
To his voice the mad weather
Seems tame :

And with curses as wild
As ere clung to child,
He devotes to the blast
The best, loveliest and last
Of his name !

TO CONSTANTIA,

SINGING.

Thus to be lost and thus to sink and die,
Perchance were death indeed !—Constantia, turn !
In thy dark eyes a power like light doth lie,
Even though the sounds which were thy voice, which burn
Between thy lips, are laid to sleep ;
Within thy breath, and on thy hair, like odour it is yet,
And from thy touch like fire doth leap.
Even while I write, my burning cheeks are wet,
Alas, that the torn heart can bleed, but not forget !

A breathless awe, like the swift change
Unseen, but felt in youthful slumbers,
Wild, sweet, but uncommunicably strange,
Thou breathest now in fast ascending numbers.
The cope of heaven seems rent and cloven
By the enchantment of thy strain,
And on my shoulders wings are woven,
To follow its sublime career,
Beyond the mighty moons that wane
Upon the verge of nature's utmost sphere,
'Till the world's shadowy walls are past and disappear.

Her voice is hovering o'er my soul—it lingers
O'ershadowing it with soft and lulling wings,
The blood of life within those snowy fingers
Teach witchcraft to the instrumental strings.

My brain is wild, my breath comes quick—
The blood is listening in my frame,
And thronging shadows, fast and thick,
Fall on my overflowing eyes ;
My heart is quivering like a flame ;
As morning dew, that in the sunbeam dies,
I am dissolved in these consuming extacies

I have no life, Constantia, now, but thee,
Whilst, like the world-surrounding air, thy song
Flows on and fills all things with melody,—
Now is thy voice a tempest swift and strong,
On which, like one in trance upborne,
Secure o'er rocks and waves I sweep,
Rejoicing like a cloud of morn.
Now 'tis the breath of summer night,
Which when the starry waters sleep,
Round western isles, with incense-blossoms bright,
Lingering, suspends my soul in its voluptuous flight.

CHARLES THE FIRST.

A FRAGMENT.

ACT I. SCENE I

The Pageant to [celebrate] the arrival of the Queen.

A PURSUIVANT.

PLACE, for the Marshal of the Masque!

FIRST SPEAKER.

What thinkest thou of this quaint masque, which turns,
Like morning from the shadow of the night,
The night to day, and London to a place
Of peace and joy?

SECOND SPEAKER.

And Hell to Heaven,

Eight years are gone,
And they seem hours, since in this populous street
I trod on grass made green by summer's rain,
For the red plague kept state within that palace
Where now reigns vanity—in nine years more
The roots will be refreshed with civil blood;
And thank the mercy of insulted Heaven
That sin and wrongs wound as an orphan's cry,
The patience of the great avenger's ear.

THIRD SPEAKER (*a youth*).

Yet, father, tis a happy sight to see,
 Beautiful, innocent, and unforbidden
 By God or man ;—'tis like the bright procession
 Of skiey visions in a solemn dream
 From which men wake as from a paradise,
 And draw new strength to tread the thorns of life.
 If God be good, wherefore should this be evil ?
 And if this be not evil, dost thou not draw
 Unseasonable poisons from the flowers
 Which bloom so rarely in this barren world ?
 O, kill these bitter thoughts which make the present
 Dark as the future !—

• • • • • • •
 When avarice and tyranny, vigilant fear,
 And open-eyed conspiracy lie sleeping
 As on Hell's threshold ; and all gentle thoughts
 Waken to worship him who giveth joys
 With his own gift.

SECOND SPEAKER.

How young art thou in this old age of time !
 How green in this grey world ! Canst thou not think
 Of change in that low scene, in which thou art
 Not a spectator but an actor ? []
 The day that dawns in fire will die in storms,
 Even though the noon be calm. My travel's done ;
 Before the whirlwind wakes I shall have found
 My inn of lasting rest, but thou must still
 Be journeying on in this inclement air.

• • • • • • •

FIRST SPEAKER.

That
Is the Archbishop.

SECOND SPEAKER.

Rather say the Pope.
London will be soon his Rome : he walks
As if he trod upon the heads of men.
He looks elate, drunken with blood and gold ;—
Beside him moves the Babylonian woman
Invisibly, and with her as with his shadow,
Mitred adulterer ! he is joined in sin,
Which turns Heaven's milk of mercy to revenge.

ANOTHER CITIZEN (*lifting up his eyes*).

Good Lord ! rain it down upon him. []
Amid her ladies walks the papist queen,
As if her nice feet scorned our English earth.
There's old Sir Henry Vane, the Earl of Pembroke,
Lord Essex, and Lord Keeper Coventry,
And others who make base their English breed
By vile participation of their honours
With papists, atheists, tyrants, and apostates.
When lawyers mask 'tis time for honest men
To strip the vizard from their purposes.

• • • • • • •

FOURTH SPEAKER (*a pursuivant*)

Give place, give place !—
You torch-bearers advance to the great gate,
And then attend the Marshal of the Masque.
Into the Royal presence.

FIFTH SPEAKER (*a law student*).

What thinkest thou
Of this quaint show of ours, my aged friend ?

FIRST SPEAKER.

I will not think but that our country's wounds
May yet be healed—The king is just and gracious,
Though wicked counsels now prevert his will :
These once cast off—

SECOND SPEAKER.

As adders cast their skins
And keep their venom, so kings often change ;
Councils and counsellors hang on one another,
Hiding the loathsome []
Like the base patchwork of a leper's rags.

THIRD SPEAKER.

O, still those dissonant thoughts—List ! loud music
Grows on the enchanted air ! And see, the torches
Restlessly flashing, and the crowd divided
Like waves before an Admiral's prow.

* * * * * *

ANOTHER SPEAKER.

Give place—
To the Marshal of the Masque !

THIRD SPEAKER.

How glorious ! See those thronging chariots
Rolling like painted clouds before the wind :
Some are
Like curved shells dyed by the azure depths
Of Indian seas ; some like the new-born moon ;
And some like cars in which the Romans climbed
(Canopied by Victory's eagle wings outspread)

The Capitolian—See how gloriously
The mettled horses in the torchlight stir
Their gallant riders, while they check their pride,
Like shapes of some diviner element !

SECOND SPEAKER.

Aye, there they are—
Nobles, and sons of nobles, patentees,
Monopolists, and stewards of this poor farm,
On whose lean sheep sit the prophetic crows.
Here is the pomp that strips the houseless orphan,
Here is the pride that breaks the desolate heart.
These are the lilies glorious as Solomon,
Who toil not, neither do they spin,—unless
It be the webs they catch poor rogues withal.
Here is the surfeit which to them who earn
The niggard wages of the earth, scarce leaves
The tithe that will support them till they crawl
Back to its cold hard bosom. Here is health
Followed by grim disease, glory by shame,
Waste by lame famine, wealth by squalid want,
And England's sin by England's punishment.
And, as the effect pursues the cause foregone,
Lo, giving substance to my words, behold
At once the sign and the thing signified—
A troop of cripples, beggars, and lean outcasts,
Horsed upon stumbling shapes, carted with dung,
Dragged for a day from cellars and low cabins
And rotten hiding-holes to point the moral
Of this presentiment, and bring up the rear
Of painted pomp with misery !

SPEAKER.

'Tis but
 The anti-masque, and serves as discords do
 In sweetest music. Who would love May flowers
 If they succeeded not to Winter's flaw;
 Or day unchanged by night; or joy itself
 Without the touch of sorrow?

* * * * *

SCENE II.

A Chamber in Whitehall.

Enter the KING, QUEEN, LAUD, WENTWORTH, and
 ARCHY. *

KING.

Thanks, gentlemen, I heartily accept
 This token of your service: your gay masque
 Was performed gallantly.

QUEEN.

And, gentlemen,

Call your poor Queen your debtor. Your quaint pageant
 Rose on me like the figures of past years,
 Treading their still path back to infancy,
 More beautiful and mild as they draw nearer]
 The quiet cradle. I could have almost wept
 To think I was in Paris, where these shows
 Are well devised—such as I was ere yet
 My young heart shared with [] the task,

The careful weight of this great monarchy.
 There, gentlemen, between the sovereign's pleasure
 And that which it regards, no clamour lifts
 Its proud interposition.

KING.

My lord of Canterbury.

ARCHY.

The fool is here,

LAUD.

I crave permission of your Majesty
 To order that this insolent fellow be
 Chastised, he mocks the sacred character,
 Scoffs at the state, and—

KING.

What, my Archy!

He mocks and mimics all he sees and hears,
 Yet with a quaint and graceful license—Prithee
 For this once do not as Prynne would, were he
 Primate of England.

He lives in his own world; and, like a parrot,
 Hung in his gilded prison from the window
 Of a queen's bower over the public way,
 Blasphemes with a bird's mind:—his words, like arrows
 Which know no aim beyond the archer's wit,
 Strike sometimes what eludes philosophy.

QUEEN.

Go, sirrah, and repent of your offence
 Ten minutes in the rain: be it your penance
 To bring news how the world goes there. Poor Archy!
 He weaves about himself a world of mirth
 Out of this wreck of ours.

LAUD.

I take with patience, as my master did,
All scoffs permitted from above.

KING.

My Lord,
Pray overlook these papers. Archy's words
Had wings, but these have talons.

QUEEN.

And the lion
That wears them must be tamed. My dearest lord,
I see the new-born courage in your eye
Armed to strike dead the spirit of the time.

Do thou persist: for, faint but in resolve,
And it were better thou hadst still remained
The slave of thine own slaves, who tear like curs
The fugitive, and flee from the pursuer;
And Opportunity, that empty wolf,
Flies at his throat who falls. Subdue thy actions
Even to the disposition of thy purpose,
And be that tempered as the Ebro's steel;
And banish weak-eyed Mercy to the weak
Whence she will greet thee with a gift of peace,
And not betray thee with a traitor's kiss,
As when she keeps the company of rebels,
Who think that she is fear. This do, lest we
Should fall as from a glorious pinnacle
In a bright dream, and wake as from a dream
Out of our worshipped state.

LAUD.

* * And if this suffice not,
 Unleash the sword and fire, that in their thirst
 They may lick up that scum of schismatics.
 I laugh at those weak rebels who, desiring
 What we possess, still prate of christian peace,
 As if those dreadful messengers of wrath,
 Which play the part of God 'twixt right and wrong,
 Should be let loose against innocent sleep
 Of templed cities and the smiling fields,
 For some poor argument of policy
 Which touches our own profit or our pride,
 Where it indeed were christian charity
 To turn the cheek even to the smiter's hand :
 And when our great Redeemer, when our God
 Is scorned in his immediate ministers,
 They talk of peace !
 Such peace as Canaan found, let Scotland now.

* * * * *

QUEEN-

My beloved lord,
 Have you not noted that the fool of late
 Has lost his careless mirth, and that his words
 Sound like the echoes of our saddest fears ?
 What can it mean ? I should be loth to think
 Some factious slave had tutored him.

KING.

It partly is,
 That our minds piece the vacant intervals
 Of his wild words with their own fashioning ;
 As in the imagery of summer clouds,

Or coals in the winter fire, idlers find
 The perfect shadows of their teeming thoughts ;
 And partly, that the terrors of the time
 Are sown by wandering Rumour in all spirits;
 And in the lightest and the least, may best
 Be seen the current of the coming wind.

QUEEN.

Your brain is overwrought with these deep thoughts ;
 Come, I will sing to you ; let us go try
 These airs from Italy, and you shall see
 A cradled miniature of yourself asleep,
 Stamped on the heart by never-erring love ;
 Likier than any Vandyke ever made,
 A pattern to the unborn age of thee,
 Over whose sweet beauty I have wept for joy
 A thousand times, and now should weep for sorrow,
 Did I not think that after we were dead
 Our fortunes would spring high in him, and that
 The cares we waste upon our heavy crown
 Would make it light and glorious as a wreath
 Of heaven's beams for his dear innocent brow.

KING.

Dear Henrietta !

• • • • •

SCENE III.

HAMPDEN, PYM, CROMWELL, *and the younger VANE.*

HAMPDEN.

England, farewell ! thou, who hast been my cradle,

Shalt never be my dungeon or my grave !
I held what I inherited in thee,
As pawn for that inheritance of freedom
Which thou hast sold for thy despoiler's smile :—
How can I call thee England, or my country ?
Does the wind hold !

VANE.

The vanes sit steady
Upon the Abbey towers. The silver lightnings
Of the evening star, spite of the city's smoke,
Tell that the north wind reigns in the upper air.
Mark too that flock of fleecy winged clouds
Sailing athwart St. Margaret's.

HAMPDEN.

Hail, fleet herald
Of tempest ! that wild pilot who shall guide
Hearts free as his, to realms as pure as thee,
Beyond the shot of tyranny ! And thou,
Fair star, whose beam lies on the wide Atlantic,
Athwart its zones of tempest and of calm,
Bright as the path to a beloved home,
O light us to the isles of th' evening land !
Like floating Edens, cradled in the glimmer
Of sunset, through the distant mist of years
Tinged by departing Hope, they gleam ! Lone regions,
Where power's poor dupes and victims, yet have never
Propitiated the savage fear of kings
With purest blood of noblest hearts ; whose dew
Is yet unstained with tears of those who wake
To weep each day the wrongs on which it dawns ;

Whose sacred silent air owns yet no echo
 Of formal blasphemies ; nor impious rites
 Wrest man's free worship from the God who loves
 Towards the worm, who envies us his love,
 Receive thou young [] of Paradise,
 These exiles from the old and sinful world !
 This glorious clime, this firmament, whose lights
 Dart mitigated influence through the veil
 Of pale blue atmosphere ; whose tears keep green
 The pavement of this moist all feeding earth,
 This vaporous horizon ; whose dim round
 Is bastioned by the circumfluous sea,
 Repelling invasion from the sacred towers,
 Presses upon me like a dungeon's grate,
 A low dark roof, a damp and narrow vault :
 The mighty universe becomes a cell
 Too narrow for the soul that owns no master.

While the loathliest spot
 Of this wide prison, England, is a nest
 Of cradled peace built on the mountain tops,
 To which the eagle-spirits of the free,
 Which range through heaven and earth, and scorn the storm
 Of time, and gaze upon the light of truth,
 Return to brood over the [] thoughts
 That cannot die, and may not be repelled.

* * *

TO THE MOON.

ART thou pale for weariness
Of climbing heaven, and gazing on the earth,
Wandering companionless
Among the stars that have a different birth,—
And ever changing, like a joyless eye
That finds no object worth its constancy ?

THE WANING MOON.

AND like a dying lady, lean and pale,
Who totters forth, wrapt in a gauzy veil,
Out of her chamber, led by the insane
And feeble wanderings of her fading brain,
The moon arose up in the murky earth,
A white and shapeless mass.

EPITAPH.

THESE are two friends whose lives were undivided,
So let their memory be, now they have glided
Under the grave ; let not their bones be parted,
For their two hearts in life were single hearted.

A VISION OF THE SEA.

'Tis the terror of tempest. The rags of the sail
Are flickering in ribbons within the fierce gale :
From the stark night of vapours the dim rain is driven,
And when lightning is loosed, like a deluge from heaven,
She sees the black trunks of the water-spouts spin,
And bend, as if heaven was raining in,
Which they seem'd to sustain with their terrible mass
As if ocean had sank from beneath them : they pass
To their graves in the deep with an earthquake of sound,
And the waves and the thunders made silent around
Leave the wind to its echo. The vessel, now toss'd
Through the low-trailing rack of the tempest, is lost
In the skirts of the thunder-cloud : now down the sweep
Of the wind-cloven wave to the chasm of the deep
It sinks, and the walls of the watery vale
Whose depths of dread calm are unmoved by the gale,
Dim mirrors of ruin hang gleaming about ;
While the surf, like a chaos of stars, like a rout
Of death-flames, like whirlpools of fire-flowing iron
With splendour and terror the black ship environ,
Or like sulphur-flakes hurl'd from a mine of pale fire
In fountains spout o'er it. In many a spire
The pyramid-billows with white points of brine
In the cope of the lightning inconstantly shine,
As piercing the sky from the floor of the sea.
The great ship seems splitting ! it cracks as a tree,

While an earthquake is splintering its root, ere the blast
Of the whirlwind that stripped it of branches has past.
The intense thunder-balls which are raining from heaven
Have shatter'd its mast, and it stands black and riven,
The chinks suck destruction. The heavy dead hulk
On the living sea rolls an inanimate bulk,
Like a corpse on the clay which is hung'ring to fold
Its corruption around it. Meanwhile, from the hold,
One deck is burst up from the waters below,
And it splits like the ice when the thaw-breezes blow
O'er the lakes of the desert! Who sit on the other?
Is that all the crew that lie burying each other,
Like the dead in a breach, round the foremast? Are those
Twin tygers, who burst, when the waters arose,
In the agony of terror, their chains in the hold;
(What now makes them tame, is what then made them bold;)
Who crouch, side by side, and have driven, like a crank,
The deep grip of their claws through the vibrating plank
Are these all? Nine weeks the tall vessel had lain
On the windless expanse of the watery plain,
Where the death-darting sun cast no shadow at noon,
And there seem'd to be fire in the beams of the moon,
Till a lead-colour'd fog gather'd up from the deep
Whose breath was quick pestilence; then, the cold sleep
Crept, like blight through the ears of a thick field of corn,
O'er the populous vessel. And even and morn,
With their hammocks for coffins the seamen aghast
Like dead men the dead limbs of their comrades cast
Down the deep, which closed on them above and around,
And the sharks and the dog-fish their grave-clothes unbound,

And were glutted like Jews with this manna rain'd down
From God on their wilderness. One after one
The mariners died ; on the eve of this day,
When the tempest was gathering in cloudy array,
But seven remain'd. Six the thunder has smitten,
And they lie black as mummies on which Time has written
His scorn of the embalmer ; the seventh, from the deck
An oak splinter pierced through his breast and his back,
And hung out to the tempest, a wreck on the wreck.
No more ? At the helm sits a woman more fair
Than heaven, when, unbinding its star-braided hair,
It sinks with the sun on the earth and the sea.
She clasps a bright child on her upgather'd knee,
It laughs at the lightning, it mocks the mixed thunder
Of the air and the sea, with desire and with wonder
It is beckoning the tygers to rise and come near,
It would play with those eyes where the radiance of fear
Is outshining the meteors ; its bosom beats high,
The heart-fire of pleasure has kindled its eye :
Whilst its mother's is lustreless. " Smile not, my child,
" But sleep deeply and sweetly, and so be beguiled
" Of the pang that awaits us, whatever that be,
" So dreadful since thou must divide it with me !
" Dream, sleep ! This pale bosom, thy cradle and bed,
" Will it rock thee not, infant ? 'Tis beating with dread !
" Alas ! what is life, what is death, what are we,
" That when the ship sinks we no longer may be !
" What ! to see thee no more, and to feel thee no more ?
" To be after life what we have been before ?
" Not to touch those sweet hands ? Not to look on those eyes

“ Those lips, and that hair, all that smiling disguise
“ Thou yet wearest, sweet spirit, which I, day by day,
“ Have so long called my child, but which now fades away
“ Like a rainbow, and I the fallen shower ?” Lo ! the ship
Is settling, it topples, the leeward ports dip ;
The tygers leap up when they feel the slow brine
Crawling inch by inch on them, hair, ears, limbs and eyne,
Stand rigid with horror ; a loud, long, hoarse cry
Bursts at once from their vitals tremendously,
And 'tis borne down the mountainous vale of the wave,
Rebounding, like thunder, from crag to cave,
Mixed with the clash of the flashing rain,
Hurried on by the might of the hurricane :
The hurricane came from the west, and past on
By the path of the gate of the eastern sun,
Transversely dividling the stream of the storm ;
As an arrowy serpent, pursuing the form
Of an elephant, bursts through the brakes of the waste.
Black as a cormorant the screaming blast, !
Between ocean and heaven, like an ocean, past,
Till it came to the clouds on the verge of the world
Which, based on the sea and to heaven upcurl'd,
Like columns and walls did surround and sustain
The dome of the tempest ; it rent them in twain,
As a flood rends its barriers of mountainous crag :
And the dense clouds in many a ruin and rag,
Like the stones of a temple ere earthquake has past,
Like the dust of its fall, on the whirlwind are cast ;
They are scatter'd like foam on the torrent ; and where
The wind has burst out from the chasm, from the air

Of clear morning, the beams of the sunrise flow in,
Unimpeded, keen, golden, and crystalline,
Banded armies of light and of air ; at one gate
They encounter, but interpenetrate.

And that breach in the tempest is widening away,
And the caverns of clouds are torn up by the day,
And the fierce winds are sinking with weary wings
Lulled by the motion and murmurings,
And the long glassy heave of the rocking sea,
And over head glorious, but dreadful to see
The wrecks of the tempest, like vapours of gold,
Are consuming in sunrise. The heaped waves behold
The deep calm of blue heaven dilating above,
And, like passions made still by the presence of Love,
Beneath the clear surface reflecting it slide
Tremulous with soft influence ; extending its tide
From the Andes to Atlas, round mountain and isle,
Round sea-birds and wrecks, paved with heaven's azure
smile.

The wide world of waters is vibrating. Where
Is the ship ? On the verge of the wave where it lay
One tyger is mingled in ghastly affray
With a sea-snake. The foam and the smoke of the battle
Stain the clear hair with sunbows ; the jar, and the rattle
Of solid bones crush'd by the infinite stress
Of the snake's adamantine voluminousness ;
And the hum of the hot blood that spouts and rains
Where the gripe of the tyger has wounded the veins,
Swollen with rage, strength, and effort ; the whirl and
the splash

As of some hideous engine whose brazen teeth smash
The thin winds and soft waves into thunder; the screams
And hissings crawl fast o'er the smooth ocean streams,
Each sound like a centipede. Near this commotion,
A blue shark is hanging within the blue ocean,
The fin-winged tomb of the victor. The other
Is winning his way from the fate of his brother,
To his own with the speed of despair. Lo! a boat
Advances; twelve rowers with the impulse of thought
Urge on the keen keel, the brine foams. At the stern,
Three marksmen stand levelling. Hot bullets burn
In the breast of the tyger, which yet bears him on
To his refuge and ruin. One fragment alone,
'Tis dwindling and sinking, 'tis now almost gone,
Of the wreck of the vessel peers out of the sea.
With her left hand she grasps it impetuously,
With her right she sustains her fair infant. Death, Fear,
Love, Beauty, are mixed in the atmosphere;
Which trembles and burns with the fervour of dread
Around her wild eyes, her bright hand, and her head,
Like a meteor of light o'er the waters! her child
Is yet smiling, and playing, and murmuring; so smiled
The false deep ere the storm. Like a sister and brother
The child and the ocean still smile on each other,
Whilst—

TO A SKYLARK.

HAIL to thee, blithe spirit !
Bird thou never wert,
That from heaven, or near it,
Pourest thy full heart
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

Higher still and higher
From the earth thou springest
Like a cloud of fire ;
The blue deep thou wingest,
And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.

In the golden lightning
Of the sunken sun,
O'er which clouds are brightning,¹
Thou dost float and run ;
Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun.

The pale purple even
Melts around thy flight ;
Like a star of heaven,
In the broad day-light
Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill delight,

Keen as are the arrows
Of that silver sphere,
Whose intense lamp narrows
In the white dawn clear,
Until we hardly see, we feel that it is there,

All the earth and air
With thy voice is loud,
As, when night is bare,
From one lonely cloud
The moon rains out her beams, and heaven is overflowed,

What thou art we know not;
What is most like thee?
From rainbow clouds there flow not
Drops so bright to see,
As from thy presence showers a rain of melody.

Like a poet hidden
In the light of thought,
Singing hymns unbidden,
Till the world is wrought
To sympathy, with hopes and fears it heeded not;

Like a high-born maiden
In a palace tower,
Soothing her love-laden
Soul in secret hour
With music sweet as love, which overflows her bower;

Like a glow-worm golden
In a dell of dew,

TO A SKYLARK,

Scattering unbeholden
Its aerial hue
Among the flowers and grass, which screen it from the
view :

Like a rose embowered
In its own green leaves,
By warm winds deflowered,
Till the scent it gives
Makes faint with too much sweet these heavy-winged
thieves :

Sound of vernal showers
On the twinkling grass,
Rain-awakened flowers,
All that ever was
Joyous, and clear, and fresh, thy music doth surpass :

Teach us, sprite or bird,
What sweet thoughts are thine :
I have never heard,
Praise of love or wine
That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine.

Chorus Hymenæal,
Or triumphal chaunt,
Matched with thine would be all
But an empty vaunt,
A thing wherein we feel there is some hidden want.

What objects are the fountains
Of thy happy strain ?

What fields, or waves, or mountains ?

What shapes of sky or plain ?

What love of thine own kind ? what ignorance of pain ?

With thy clear keen joyance

Langour cannot be :

Shadow of annoyance

Never came near thee :

Thou lovest ; but ne'er love's sad satiety.

Waking or asleep,

Thou of death must deem

Things more true and deep

Than we mortals dream,

Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream ?

We look before and after,

And pine for what is not :

Our sincerest laughter

With some pain is fraught ;

Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

Yet if we could scorn

Hate, and pride, and fear ;

If we were things born

Not to shed a tear,

I know not how thy joy we ever should come near.

Better than all measures

Of delightful sound,

Better than all treasures

That in books are found,
Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the ground !

Teach me half the gladness
That thy brain must know,
Such harmonious madness
From my lips would flow,
The world should listen then, as I am listening now.

PRINCE ATHANASE ;

A FRAGMENT.

THERE was a youth, who, as with toil and travel,
Had grown quite weak and grey before his time ;
Nor any could the restless griefs unravel,

Which burned within him, withering up his prime
And goading him, like fiends, from land to land.
Not his the load of any secret crime,

For nought of ill his heart could understand,
But pity and wild sorrow for the same ;—
Not his the thirst for glory or command

Baffled with blast of hope-consuming shame ;
Nor evil joys which fire the vulgar breast
And quench in speedy smook its feeble flame,

Had left within his soul their dark unrest :
Nor what religion fables of the grave
Feared he.—Philosophy's accepted guest.

For none than he a purer heart could have,
Or that loved good more for itself alone ;
Of nought in heaven or earth was he the slave.

What sorrow deep, and shadowy, and unknown,
Sent him, a hopeless wanderer, through mankind ?—
If with a human sadness he did groan,

He had a gentle yet aspiring mind ;
Just, innocent, with varied learning fed,
And such a glorious consolation find
In others' joy, when all their own is dead :
He loved, and laboured for his kind in grief,
And yet, unlike all others, it is said,

That from such toil he never found relief ;
Although a child of fortune and of power,
Of an ancestral name the orphan chief.

His soul had wedded wisdom, and her dower
His love and justice, clothed in which he sate
Apart from men, as in a lonely tower,

Pitying the tumult of their dark estate—
Yet even in youth did he not e'er abuse
The strength of wealth or thought, to consecrate

Those false opinions which the harsh rich use
To blind the world they furnish for their pride ;
Nor did he hold from any man his dues,

But like a steward in honest dealings tried.
With those who toil'd and wept, the poor and wise
His riches and his cares he did divide.

Fearless he was, and scorning all disguise,
What he dared do or think, though men might start,
He spoke with mild yet unaverted eyes ;

Liberal he was of soul, and frank of heart,
And to his many friends all loved him well—
Whate'er he knew or felt he would impart,

If words he found those inmost thoughts to tell ;
If not, he smiled or wept ; and his weak foes
He neither spurned nor hated, though with fell

And mortal hate their thousand voices rose,
They past like aimless arrows from his ear—
Nor did his heart or mind its portal close

To those, or them, or any whom life's sphere
May comprehend within its wide array.
What sadness made that vernal spirit sore ?

He know not. Though his life, day after day,
Was falling like and unreplenished stream,
Though in his eyes a cloud and burthen lay,

Through which his soul, like Vespers' serene beam
Piercing the chasms ever rising clouds,
Shone, softly burning ; though his lips did seem

Like reeds which quiver in impetuous floods ;
And though his sleep, and o'er each waking hour,
Thoughts after thoughts, unresting multitudes,

Were driven within him, by some secret power,
Which bade them blaze, and live, and roll afar,
Like lights and sounds, from haunted tower

O'er castled mountains borne, when tempest's war
Is levied by the night-contending winds,
And the pale dalesmen watch with eager ear ;—

Though such were in his spirit, as the fiends
Which wake and feed on everliving woe,—
What was this grief, which ne'er in other mind

A mirror found,—he knew not—none could know
But on whoe'er might question him he turned
The light of his frank eyes, as if to shew,

He knew not of the grief within that burned,
But asked forbearance with a mournful look ;
Or spoke in words from which none ever learned

The cause of his disquietude ; or shook
With spasms of silent passion ; or turned pale :
So that his friends soon rarely undertook.

To stir his secret pain without avail ;—
For all who knew and loved him then perceived
That there was drawn an adamantine veil

Between his heart and mind,—both unrelieved
Wrought in his brain and bosom separate strife.
Some said that he was mad, others believed

That memories of an antenatal life
Made this, where now he dwelt, a penal hell ;
And others said that such mysterious grief

From God's displeasure, like a darkness, fell
On souls like his which owned no higher law
Than love ; love calm, stedfast, invincible

By mortal-fear or supernatural awe ;
And others,—“ 'Tis the shadow of a dream
Which the veiled eye of memory never saw

“ But through the soul's abyss, like some dark stream
Through shattered mines and caverns underground
Rolls, shaking its foundations ; and no beam

“ Of joy may rise, but it is quenched and drowned
In the dim whirlpools of this dream obscure,
Soon its exhausted waters will have found

“ A lair of rest beneath thy spirit pure,
O Athanase!—in one so good and great,
Evil or tumult cannot long endure.”

So spake they : idly of another's state
Babbling vain words and fond philosophy
This was their consolation ; such debate

Men held with one another ; nor did he
Like one who labours with a human woe
Decline this talk ; as if its theme might be

Another, not himself, he to and fro
Questioned and canvassed it with subtlest wit,
And none but those who loved him best could know

That which he knew not, how it galled and bit
His weary mind, this converse vain and cold ;
For like an eyeless night-mare grief did sit

Upon his being ; a snake which fold by fold
Pressed out the life of life, a clinging fiend
Which clenched him if he stirred with deadlier hold ;—
And so his grief remained —let it remain—untold.*

* The Author was pursuing a fuller developement of the ideal character of Athanase, when it struck him that in an attempt at extreme refinement and analysis, his conceptions might be betrayed into the assuming a morbid character. The reader will judge whether he is a loser or a gainer by this difference.—*Author's Note.*

December, 1817.

PRINCE ATHANASE.

PART II.

FRAGMENT I.

PRINCE Athanase had one beloved friend,
An old, old man, with hair of silver white,
And lips where heavenly smiles would hang and blend

With his wise words ; and eyes whose arrowy light
Shone like the reflex of a thousand minds.
He was the last whom superstition's blight

Had spared in Greece—the blight that cramps and blinds,
And in his olive bower at CEnoe
Had sate from earliest youth. Like one who finds

A fertile island in the barren sea,
One mariner who has survived his mates
Many a drear month in a great ship—so he

With soul-sustaining songs, and sweet debates
Of ancient lore, there fed his lonely being :—
“ The mind becomes that which it contemplates,”—

And thus Zonoras, by forever seeing
Their bright creations, grew like wisest men ;
And when he heard the crash of nations fleeing

A bloodier power than ruled thy ruins then,
O sacred Hellas ! many weary years
He wandered, till the path of Laian's glen

Was grass-grown—and the unremembered tears
Were dry in Laian for their honoured chief,
Who fell in Byzant, pierced by Moslem spears :

And as the lady looked with faithful grief
From her high lattice o'er the rugged path,
Where she once saw that horseman toil, with brief

And blighting hope, who with the news of death
Struck body and soul as with a mortal blight,
She saw beneath the chesnuts, far beneath,

An old man toiling up, a weary wight ;
And soon within her hospitable hall
She saw his white hairs glittering in the light

Of the wood fire, and round his shoulders fall ;
And his wan visage and his withered mien
Yet calm and [] and majestic.

And Athanase, her child, who must have been
Then three years old, sate opposite and gazed.

FRAGMENT II.

Such was Zonoras ; and as daylight finds
An amaranth glittering on the path of frost,
When autumn nights have nipt all weaker kind,

Thus had his age, dark, cold, and tempest-tost,
Shone truth upon Zonoras; and he filled
From fountains pure, nigh overgrown and lost,

The spirit of Prince Athanase, a child,
With soul-sustaining songs of ancient lore
And philosophic wisdom, clear and mild.

And sweet and subtle talk they evermore,
The pupil and master shared; until,
Sharing the undiminishable store,

The youth, as shadows on a grassy hill
Outran the winds that chase them, soon outran
His teacher, and did teach with native skill

Strange truths and new to that experienced man;
Still they were friends, as few have ever been
Who mark the extremes of life's discordant span,

And in the caverns of the forest green,
Or by the rocks of echoing ocean hoar,
Zonoras and Prince Athanase were seen

By summer woodmen; and when winter's roar
Sounded o'er earth and sea its blast of war,
The Balearic fisher, driven from shore,

Hanging upon the peaked wave afar,
Then saw their lamp from Laian's turret gleam,
Piercing the stormy darkness like a star,

Which pours beyond the sea one stedfast beam,
Whilst all the constellations of the sky
Seemed wrecked.

They did but seem—

For, lo! the wintry clouds are all gone by,
And bright Arcturus through yon pines is glowing,
And far o'er southern waves, immoveably

Belted Orion hangs—warm light is flowing
From the young moon into the sunset's chasm.—
“ O, summer night! with power divine, bestowing

“ On thine own bird the sweet enthusiasm
Which overflows in notes of liquid gladness,
Filling the sky like light! How many a spasm

“ Of fevered brains, oppressed with grief and madness,
Were lulled by thee, delightful nightingale!
And these soft waves, murmuring a gentle sadness,

“ And the far sighings of yon piny dale
Made vocal by some wind, we feel not here, --
I bear alone what nothing may avail

“ To lighten—a strange load!”—No human ear
Heard this lament; but o'er the visage wan
Of Athanaë, a ruffling atmosphere

Of dark emotion, a swift shadow ran,
Like wind upon some forest-bosomed lake,
Glassy and dark.—And that divine old man

Beheld his mystic friend's whole being shake,
Even where its inmost depths were gloomiest—
And with a calm and measured voice he spake,

And with a soft and equal pressure, prest
That cold lean hand :—“ Dost thou remember yet
When the curved moon then lingering in the west

" Paused in yon waves her mighty horns to wet,
 How in those beams we walked, half resting on the sea?
 'Tis just one year—sure thou dost not forget—

"Then Plato's words of light in thee and me
 Lingered like moonlight in the moonless east,
 For we had just then read—thy memory

"Is faithful now—the story of the feast;
 And Agathon and Diotima seemed
 From death and [] released.

FRAGMENT III.

'Twas at the season when the Earth upsprings
 From slumber, as a sphered angel's child,
 Shadowing its eyes with green and golden wings,

Stands up before its mother bright and mild,
 Of whose soft voice the air expectant seems—
 So stood before the sun, which shone and smiled

To see it rise thus joyous from its dreams,
 The fresh and radiant Earth. The hoary grove
 Waxed green—and flowers burst forth like starry beams;—

The grass in the warm sun did start and move,
 And sea-buds burst under the waves serene:
 How many a one, though none be near to love,

Loves then the shade of his own soul, half seen
 In any mirror—or the spring's young minions,
 The winged leaves amid the copes green;—

How many a spirit then puts on the pinions
Of fancy, and outstrips the lagging blast,
And his own steps—and over wide dominions

Sweeps in his dream-drawn chariot, far and fast,
More fleet than storms—the wide world shrinks below,
When winter and despondency are past.

'Twas at this season that Prince Athanase
Past the white Alps—those eagle-baffling mountains
Slept in their shrouds of snow ;—beside the ways

The waterfalls were voiceless—for their fountains
Were changed to mines of sunless crystal now,
Or by the curdling winds—like brazen wings

Which clanged along the mountain's marble brow,
Warped into adamantine fretwork, hung
And filled with frozen light the chasm below.

FRAGMENT IV.

Thou art the wine whose drunkenness is all
We can desire, O Love ! and happy souls,
Ere from thy vine the leaves of autumn fall,

Catch thee, and feed from their overflowing bowls
Thousands who thirst for thy ambrosial dew ;—
Thou art the radiance which where ocean rolls

Investests it ; and when the heavens are blue
Thou fillest them ; and when the earth is fair
The shadow of thy moving wings imbue

Its deserts and its mountains, till they wear
Beauty like some bright robe ;—thou ever soarest
Among the towers of men, and as soft air

In spring, which moves the unawakened forest,
Clothing with leaves its branches bare and bleak,
Thou floatest among men ; and aye implorest

That which from thee they should implore :—the weak
Alone kneel to thee, offering up the hearts
The strong have broken—yet where shall any seek

A garment whom thou clothest not ?

Marlow, 1817.

FINIS.

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